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THE PORTRAITURE OF HIS ROYAL MAJESTIE
KING CHARLES II

*Thus when His Sullen Stars were milder grown
Came our Great Charles to his Imperiall Throne
Farre Nobler though not finer than the rest
His Gallantry was all within his Breast*

ROYALTY RESTORED

OR

LONDON UNDER CHARLES II.

BY

J. FITZGERALD MOLLOY

AUTHOR OF

‘COURT LIFE BELOW STAIRS ; OR, LONDON UNDER THE GEORGES’

‘THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF PEG WOFFINGTON’

‘IT IS NO WONDER,’ ETC.

*WITH AN ETCHING OF CHARLES II. BY J. GREGO,
AND ELEVEN OTHER PORTRAITS*

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

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TO
THOMAS HARDY, ESQ.

DEAR MR. HARDY,

In common with all readers of the English language, I owe you a debt of gratitude, the which I rejoice to acknowledge, even in so poor a manner as by dedicating these volumes to you.

Believe me,

Faithfully yours always,

J. FITZGERALD MOLLOY.

P R E F A C E.

No social history of the court of Charles II. has heretofore been written. The Grammont Memoirs, devoid of date and detail, and addressed 'to those who read only for amusement,' present but brief imperfect sketches of the wits and beauties who thronged the court of the merry monarch whilst the brilliant Frenchman sojourned in England. Pepys, during the first nine years of the Restoration, narrates such gossip as reached him regarding Whitehall and the practices that obtained there. Evelyn records some trifling actions of the king and his courtiers, with a view of pointing a moral, rather than from a desire of adorning a tale.

To supply this want in our literature, I have endeavoured to present a picture of the domestic life of a king, whose name recalls pages of the brightest romance and strangest gallantry in our chronicles. To this I have added a study of

London during his reign, taken as far as possible from rare, and invariably from authentic sources. It will readily be seen these volumes, embracing such subjects, could alone have resulted from careful study and untiring consultation of diaries, records, memoirs, letters, pamphlets, tracts, and papers left by contemporaries familiar with the court and capital. The accomplishment of such a task necessitated an expenditure of time, and devotion to labour, such as in these fretful and impatient days is seldom bestowed on work.

As in previous volumes I have writ no fact is set down without authority, so likewise the same rule is pursued in these ; and for such as desire to test the accuracy thereof, or follow at further length statements necessarily abbreviated, a list is appended of the principal literature consulted. And inasmuch as I have found pleasure in this work, so may my gentle readers derive profit therefrom ; and as I have laboured, so may they enjoy. Expressing which fair wishes, and moreover commending myself unto their love and service, I humbly take my leave.

J. FITZGERALD MOLLOY.

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AND NEWSPAPERS,
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ROYALTY RESTORED;

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LONDON UNDER CHARLES II.

CHAPTER I.

Cromwell is sick unto death.—Fears and suspicions.—Killing no Murder.—A memorable storm.—The end of all.—Richard Cromwell made Protector.—He refuses to shed blood.—Disturbance and dissatisfaction.—Downfall of Richard.—Charles Stuart proclaimed king.—Rejoicement of the nation.—The king comes into his own.—Entry into London.—Public joy and satisfaction.

ON the 30th of January, 1649, Charles I. was beheaded. In the last days of August in the year of grace 1658, Oliver Cromwell lay sick unto death at the Palace of Whitehall. On the 27th day of June in the previous year, he had, in the presence of the Judges of the land, the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of the City, and

Members of Parliament assembled at Westminster Hall, seated himself on the coronation chair of the Stuarts, assumed the title of Lord Protector, donned a robe of violet velvet, girt his loins with a sword of state, and grasped the sceptre, symbolic of kingly power. From that hour distrust beset his days, his nights were fraught with fear. All his keen and subtle foresight, his strong and restless energies, had since then been exerted in suppressing plots against his power, and detecting schemes against his life, concocted by the Republicans whose liberty he had betrayed, and by the Royalists whose king he had beheaded.

Soon after he had assumed the title of Lord High Protector, a most daring pamphlet, openly advocating his assassination, was circulated in vast numbers throughout the kingdom. It was entitled 'Killing no Murder,' and was dedicated in language outrageously bold to His Highness Oliver Cromwell. 'To your Highness justly belongs the honour of dying for the people,' it stated, 'and it cannot but be an unspeakable consolation to you, in the last moments of your life, to consider with how much benefit to the

world you are likely to leave it. It is then only, my lord, the titles you now usurp will be truly yours ; you will then be, indeed, the deliverer of your country, and free it from a bondage little inferior to that from which Moses delivered his. You will then be that true reformer which you would now be thought ; religion shall then be restored, liberty asserted, and Parliaments have those privileges they have sought for. All this we hope from your Highness's happy expiration. To hasten this great good is the chief end of my writing this paper ; and if it have the effects I hope it will, your Highness will quickly be out of the reach of men's malice, and your enemies will only be able to wound you in your memory, which strokes you will not feel.'

The possession of life becomes dearest when its forfeiture is threatened, and therefore Cromwell took all possible means to guard against treachery—the only foe he feared, and feared exceedingly. 'His sleeps were disturbed with the apprehensions of those dangers the day presented unto him in the approaches of any strange face, whose motion he would most fixedly attend,' writes James Heath, gentleman, in his

‘Chronicles,’ published in 1675. ‘Above all, he very carefully observed such whose mind or aspect were featured with any chearful and debonair lineaments ; for such he boded were they that would despatch him ; to that purpose he always went secretly armed, both offensive and defensive ; and never stirred without a great guard. In his usual journey between Whitehall and Hampton Court, by several roads, he drove full speed in the summer time, making such a dust with his life-guard, part before and part behinde, at a convenient distance, for fear of choaking him with it, that one could hardly see for a quarter of an hour together, and always came in some private way or other.’ The same authority, in his ‘Life of Cromwell,’ states of him, ‘It was his constant custom to shift and change his lodging, to which he passed through twenty several locks, and out of which he had four or five ways to avoid pursuit.’ Welwood, in his ‘Memoirs,’ adds the Protector wore a coat of mail beneath his dress, and carried a poniard under his cloak.

Nor was this all. According to the ‘Chronicle of the late Intestine War,’ Cromwell ‘would

sometimes pretend to be merry, and invite persons, of whom he had some suspicion, to his cups, and then drill out of their open hearts such secrets as he wisht for. He had freaks also to divert the vexations of his misgiving thoughts, calling on by the beat of drum his footguards, like a kennel of hounds to snatch away the scraps and reliques of his table. He said every man's hand was against him, and that he ran daily into further perplexities, out of which it was impossible to extricate, or secure himself therein, without running into further danger ; so that he began to alter much in the tenour of his former converse, and to run and transform into the manners of the ancient tyrants, thinking to please and mitigate his own tortures with the sufferings of others.'

But now the fate his vigilance had hitherto combated at last overtook him in a manner impossible to evade. He was attacked by divers infirmities, but for some time made no outward sign of his suffering, until one day five physicians came and waited on him, as Dr. George Bate states in his *Elenchus Motuum Nuperorum*. And one of them, feeling his pulse, declared his Highness

suffered from an intermittent fever ; hearing which ' he looked pale, fell into a cold sweat, almost fainted away, and orders himself to be carried to bed.' His fright, however, was but momentary. He was resolved to live. He had succeeded in raising himself to a position of vast power, but had failed in attaining the great object of his ambition—the crowned sovereignty of the nation he had stirred to its very centre, and conquered to its furthest limits. Brought face to face with death, his indomitable will, which had shaped untoward circumstances to his accord with a force like unto fate itself, now determined to conquer his shadowy enemy which alone intercepted his path to the throne. Therefore as he lay in bed he said to those around him with that hypocrisy of speech which had cloaked his cruellest deeds and dissembled his most ambitious designs, ' I would be willing to live to be further serviceable to God and his people.'

As desires of waking hours are answered in sleep, so in response to his nervous craving for life he had delusive assurances of health through the special bounty of Providence. He was therefore presently able to announce he ' had very

great discoveries of the Lord to him in his sickness, and hath some certainty of being restored ;' as Fleetwood, his son-in-law, wrote on the 24th of August in this same year.

Accordingly, when one of the physicians came to him next morning, the High Protector said to him, ' Why do you look sad ? ' To which the man of lore replied evasively, ' So it becomes anyone who had the weighty care of his life and health upon him.' Then Cromwell to this purpose spoke to him : ' You think I shall die ; I tell you I shall not die this bout ; I am sure on't. Don't think I am mad. I speak the words of truth upon surer grounds than Galen or your Hippocrates furnish you with. God Almighty himself hath given that answer, not to my prayers alone, but also to the prayers of those who entertain a stricter commerce and greater intimacy with him. Ye may have skill in the nature of things, yet nature can do more than all physicians put together, and God is far above nature.' The doctor besought him to rest, and left the room. Outside he met one of his colleagues, to whom he gave it as his opinion their patient had grown light-headed, and he

repeated the words which Cromwell had spoken. 'Then,' said his brother-physician, 'you are certainly a stranger in this house ; don't you know what was done last night? The chaplain and all their friends being dispersed into several parts of the palace have prayed to God for his health, and they all heard the voice of God saying, "He will recover," and so they are all certain of it.'

'Never, indeed, was there a greater stock of prayers going on for any man,' as Thurlow, his secretary, writes. So sure were those around him that Providence must hearken to and grant the fulfilment of such desires as they thought well to express, that, as Thomas Goodwin, one of Cromwell's chaplains, said, 'We asked not for the Protector's life, for we were assured He had too great things for this man to do, to remove him yet ; but we prayed for his speedy recovery, because his life and presence were so necessary to divers things then of great moment to be despatched.' When this Puritanical fanatic was presently disappointed, Bishop Burnet narrates 'he had the impudence to say to God, "Thou hast deceived us."'

Meanwhile the Protector lay writhing in pain and terror. His mind was sorely troubled at the remembrance of the last words spoken by his daughter Elizabeth, who had threatened judgments upon him because of his refusal to save the King ; whilst his body was grievously racked with a tertian fever, and a foul humour which, beginning in his foot, worked its way steadily to his heart. Moreover, some insight regarding his future seemed given to him in his last days, for he appeared, as Ludlow, his contemporary, states, 'above all concerned for the reproaches he saw men would cast upon his name; in tramping upon his ashes when dead.'

On the 30th of August his danger became evident even to himself, and all hope of life left him. For hours after the certain approach of death became undeniably certain, he remained quiet and speechless, seemingly heedless of the exhortation and prayers of his chaplains, till suddenly turning to one of them, he whispered, 'Tell me, is it possible to fall from grace?' The preacher had a soothing reply ready: 'It is not,' he answered. 'Then,' exclaimed this unhappy man, whose soul was red with the blood

of thousands of his countrymen, 'I am safe, for I know I was once in grace.' Anon he cries out whilst tossing wildly on his bed, 'Lord, although I am a miserable and a wretched creature, I am in covenant with Thee through grace, and I may and will come to Thee for Thy people. Pardon such as desire to trample upon the dust of a poor worm. And give us a good night, if it be Thy pleasure. Amen.'

It was now the 2nd of September. As the evening of that day approached he fell into a stupor, and those who watched him thought the end had come.

Within the darkened chamber in Whitehall all was silence and gloom ; without all was tumult and fear. Before the gates of the palace a turbulent crowd of soldiers and citizens had gathered in impatient anxiety. Those he had raised to power, those whose fortunes depended on his life, were steeped in gloom ; those whose principles he had outraged by his usurpation, those whose position he had crushed by his sway, rejoiced at heart. Not only the capital, but the whole nation, was divided into factions which one strong hand alone had been able to control ;

and terror, begotten by dire remembrances of civil war and bloodshed, abode with all lovers of peace.

As evening closed in, the elements appeared in unison with the distracted condition of the kingdom. Dark clouds, seeming of ominous import to men's minds, gathered in the heavens, to be presently torn asunder and hurried in wild flight by a tempestuous wind across the troubled sky. As night deepened the gale steadily increased, until it raged in boundless fury above the whole island and the seas that rolled around its shores. In town houses rocked on their foundations, turrets and steeples were flung from their places ; in the country great trees were uprooted, corn-stacks levelled to the ground, and the winter fruits destroyed ; whilst at sea ships sank to rise no more. This memorable storm lasted all night, and continued until three o'clock next afternoon, when Cromwell expired.

His body was immediately embalmed, but was of necessity interred in great haste. Westminster Abbey, the last home of kings and princes, was selected as the fittest resting-place for the regicide. Though it was impossible to honour

his remains by stately ceremonials, his followers were not content to let the occasion of his death pass without commemoration. They therefore had a waxen image of him made, which they resolved to surround with all the pomp and circumstances of royalty. For this purpose they carried it to Somerset House—one of the late King's palaces—and placed it on a couch of crimson velvet beneath a canopy of state. Upon its shoulders they hung a purple mantle, in its right hand they placed a golden sceptre, and by its side they laid an imperial crown, probably the same which, according to Welwood, the Protector had secretly caused to be made and conveyed to Whitehall with a view to his coronation. The walls and ceiling of the room in which the effigy lay were covered by sable velvet ; the passages leading to it crowded with soldiery. After a few weeks the town grew tired of this sight, when the waxen image was taken to another apartment, hung with rich velvets and golden tissue, and otherwise adorned to symbolize heaven, when it was placed upon a throne, clad 'in a shirt of fine Holland lace, doublet and breeches of Spanish fashion with great skirts,

silk stockings, shoe-strings, and gaiters suitable, and black Spanish leather shoes.' Over this attire was flung a cloak of purple velvet, and on his head was placed a crown with many precious stones. The room was then lit, as Ludlow narrates, 'by four or five hundred candles set in flat shining candlesticks, so placed round near the roof that the light they gave seemed like the rays of the sun, by all which he was represented to be now in a state of glory.' Lest, indeed, there should be any doubt as to the place where his soul abode, Sterry, the Puritan preacher, imparted the information to all, that the Protector 'now sat with Christ at the right hand of the Father.'

But this pomp and state in no way overawed the people, who, by pelting with mire Cromwell's escutcheon placed above the great gate of Somerset House gave evidence of the contempt in which they held his memory. After a lapse of over two months from the day of his death, the effigy was carried to Westminster Abbey with more than regal ceremony, the expenses of his lying-in-state and of his funeral procession amounting, as stated by Walker and Noble, to upwards of

£29,000. 'It was the joyfullest funeral I ever saw,' writes Evelyn, 'for there were none that cried but dogs, which the soldiers hooted away with a barbarous noise, drinking and taking tobacco as they went.'

A little while before his death Cromwell had named his eldest surviving son, Richard, as his successor, and he was accordingly declared Protector, with the apparent consent of the council, soldiers, and citizens. Nor did the declaration cause any excitement. 'There is not a dog who wags his tongue, so profound is the calm which we are in,' writes Thurlow to Oliver's second son, Henry, then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. But if the nation in its dejection made no signs of resistance, neither did it give any indications of satisfaction, and Richard was proclaimed 'with as few expressions of joy as had ever been observed on a like occasion.' For a brief while a stupor seemed to lull the factious party spirit which was shortly to plunge the country into fresh difficulties. The Cromwellians and Republicans foresaw resistless strife, and the Royalists quietly and hopefully abided results.

Nor had they long to wait. In the new

Parliament assembled in January, 1659, the Republicans showed themselves numerous and bold beyond measure, and hesitated to recognise Richard Cromwell as successor to the Protectorate. However, on the 14th of the following month the Cromwellians gained the upper hand, when Richard was confirmed in his title of 'Lord Protector, and First Magistrate of England, Scotland, and Ireland, with all the territories depending thereon.' Further discussion quickly followed. 'One party thinks the Protectorate cannot last; the other that the Republican cannot raise itself again; the indifferent hope that both will be right. It is easy to foretell the upshot,' writes Hyde. The disunion spread rapidly and widely; not only was the Parliament divided against itself, but so likewise was the army; and the new Protector had neither the courage nor the ability to put down strife with a strong hand. Richard Cromwell was a man of peaceful disposition, gentle manners, and unambitious mind, whom fate had forced into a position for which he was in no way fitted. By one of those strange contradictions which nature sometimes produces, he differed in all things from his father;

for not only was he pleasure-loving, joyous, and humane, but he was, moreover, a Royalist at heart, and continued in friendship with the Cavaliers up to the period of his proclamation as Protector. It has been stated that falling on his knees he entreated his father to spare the life of Charles I. ; it is certain he remained inactive whilst the civil wars devastated the land ; and there is evidence to show that, during the seven months and twenty-eight days of his Protectorship, he shrank from the perpetration of cruelty and crime. Accordingly, when those who had at first supported his authority eventually conspired against him, he refrained from using his power to crush them. At this his friends were wrath. ‘It is time to look about you,’ said Lord Howard, speaking with the bluntness of a friend. ‘Empire and command are not now the question. Your person, your life, are in peril. You are the son of Cromwell : show yourself worthy to be his son. This business requires a bold stroke, and must be supported by a good head. Do not suffer yourself to be daunted. I will rid you of your enemies : do you stand by me, and only back my zeal for your honour with



OLIVER CROMWELL.

your name ; my head shall answer for the consequences.'

Colonel Ingoldsby seconded the advice Lord Howard gave, but Richard Cromwell hearkened to neither. 'I have never done anybody any harm, and never will,' said he. 'I will not have a drop of blood spilt for the preservation of my greatness, which is a burden to me.' At this Lord Howard was indignant. 'Do you think,' he asked, 'this moderation of yours will repair the wrong your family has committed by its elevation? Everybody knows that by violence your father procured the death of the late king, and kept his sons in banishment: mercy in the present state of affairs is unreasonable. Lay aside this pusillanimity; every moment is precious; your enemies spend the time in acting which we waste in consulting.' 'Talk no more of it,' answered the Protector. 'I am thankful for your friendship, but violent counsels suit not with me.'

The climax was at hand; his fall was but a question of time. 'A wonderfull and suddaine change in y^e face of y^e publiq,' writes Evelyn, on the 25th of April, 1659. 'Y^e new Protector

Richard slighted ; several pretenders and parties strove for the Government ; all anarchy and confusion. Lord have mercy on us !'

Before the month of May had expired, the House of Commons commissioned two of its members to bid Richard Cromwell leave the palace of Whitehall, and obtain his signature to a deed wherein he acknowledged complete submission to Parliament. His brief inglorious reign was therefore at an end. 'As with other men,' he wrote to the House of Commons, 'I expect protection from the present Government: I do hold myself obliged to demean myself with all the peaceableness under it, and to procure, to the utmost of my power, that all in whom I have any interest to do the same.' He retired into Hampshire, where he dwelt as a private gentleman. His brother Henry resigned his position as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and settled in Cambridge-shire. From this time the name of Cromwell was no longer a power in the land.

During two years subsequent to the death of Oliver the government of England underwent various changes, and the kingdom suffered many disorders ; until, being heartily sick of anarchy,

the people desired a king might once more reign over them. Accordingly, they turned their eyes towards the son of him whom 'the boldest villany that ever any nation saw' had sent to the block. And the time being ripe, Charles Stuart, then an exile in Breda, despatched Sir John Grenville with royal letters to both Houses of Parliament, likewise to the Lord Mayor of London and members of the Common Council, to Monk, commander of the forces, and Montagu, admiral of the fleet. These letters were received with so universal a joy and applause, that Parliament forthwith ordained Charles Stuart should be proclaimed 'the most potent, mighty, and undoubted King of England, Scotland and Ireland.' Moreover, both Houses agreed that an honourable body of Commissioners, all men of great quality and birth, should be sent to the king with letters, humbly begging his majesty would be pleased to hasten his long-desired return into England. And because they knew full well the royal exchequer was empty, Parliament ordered these noble gentlemen to carry with them a present of fifty thousand pieces of gold to the king, together

with ten thousand to his brother of York, and five thousand to his brother of Gloucester. Nor was the City of London backwards in sending expressions of loyalty and tokens of homage and devotion ; to evince which twenty valiant men and worthy citizens were despatched with messages of goodwill towards him, and presents in gold to the amount of twelve thousand pounds.

And presently Admiral Montagu arriving with his fleet upon the coast of Holland, awaited his majesty near Scheveling ; and all things being in readiness the king with his royal brothers and a most noble train set sail for England.

It came to pass that on the 25th day of May, 1660, a vast concourse of nobility, gentry, and citizens had assembled at Dover to meet and greet their sovereign king, Charles II., on his landing. On the fair morning of that day a sound of cannon thundering from the castle announced that the fleet, consisting of 'near forty sail of great men-of-war,' which conveyed his majesty to his own, was in sight ; whereon an innumerable crowd betook its joyful way to the shore. The sun was most gloriously bright, the

sky cloudless, the sea calm. Far out upon the blue horizon white-winged ships could be clearly discerned. By three o'clock in the afternoon they had reached the harbour, when the king, embarking in a galley most richly adorned, was rowed to shore. Then cannon roared once more from the castle, and were answered from the beach ; bells rang from church towers, and a mighty shout went up from the hearts of the people.

In the midst of these rejoicings Charles II. landed, and the gallant General Monk, who had been mainly instrumental in bringing his royal master to the throne without loss of blood, now fell upon his knees to greet his majesty. The king raised the general from the ground, embraced and kissed him. Then the nobility hastened to pay their duty likewise, and the Mayor and Aldermen of Dover presented him with a most loyal address. And presently, with the roar of cannon, the clangour of bells, the sound of music, and the shouts of a great multitude ringing in his ears, the king advanced on his way towards Canterbury. At the gates of this ancient city he was met by the mayor and

aldermen, and was presented by them with a golden tankard. Here he spent the following day, which being Sunday, he went with a great train to the cathedral, where service according to the Church of England, long disused by the Puritans, was restored, to the satisfaction of many.

Setting out from Canterbury on Monday, the 29th of May—which was, moreover, the anniversary of his birth—he journeyed to Blackheath, where he reviewed the forces drawn up with great pomp and military splendour to greet him, and bestowed many gracious expressions on them. Then, having received assurances of their loyal homage through their commander, Colonel Knight, he turned towards London town. And the nearer he approached, the more dense became crowds thronging to meet him ; the fields on either side the long white road being filled with persons of all conditions, who cheered him lustily. As he passed, they flung leaves of trees and sweet May flowers beneath his horse's feet, and waved green boughs on high. And when he came to St. George's Fields, there was my lord mayor in his robes of new velvet, wearing his collar of wrought gold, and attended

by his aldermen in brave apparel likewise. Going down on his knees my lord mayor presented the king with the city sword, which his majesty with some happy expressions of confidence gave back into his good keeping, having first struck him with it upon the shoulder and bade him rise up Sir Thomas Allen. Whereon that worthy man rose to his feet and conducted the king to a large and richly adorned pavilion, and entertained him at a splendid collation, it being then one of the clock. And being refreshed his majesty set forth again, and entered the city, which had never before shown so brave and goodly an appearance as on this May day, when all the world seemed mad with joy.

From London Bridge even to Whitehall Palace the way was lined on one side by the train-bands of the city, and on the other by the city companies in their rich livery gowns; to which were added a number of gentlemen volunteers, all in white doublets, commanded by Sir John Stanel. Across the streets hung garlands of spring flowers that made the air most sweet, and at the corners thereof were arches of white hawthorn in full bloom, bedecked with streamers of gay

colours. From wooden railed balconies, jutting windows, and quaint gables hung fair tapestries, rich silks, and stuffs of brilliant hues ; and from the high red chimneys, grey turrets, and lofty spires, floated flags bearing the royal arms of England, and banners inscribed with such mottoes as loyalty and affection could suggest. The windows and galleries were filled with ladies of quality in bright dresses ; the roofs and scaffolding, with citizens of all classes, who awaited with eager and joyous faces to salute their lord and king.

And presently, far down the line of streets, a sound was heard of innumerable voices cheering most lustily, which every minute became nearer and louder, till at last a blare of trumpets was distinguished followed by martial music, and the tramp and confusion of a rushing crowd which suddenly parted on all sides. Then there burst on view the first sight of that brave and glorious cavalcade to the number of twenty thousand, which ushered the king back unto his own. First came a troop of young and comely gentlemen, three hundred in all, representing the pride and valour of the kingdom, wearing cloth of silver

doublets, and brandishing naked swords which flashed in the sunlight. Then another company, less by a hundred in number, habited in rich velvet coats, their footmen clad in purple liveries; and next a goodly troop under the command of Sir John Robinson, all dressed in buff coats with cloth of silver sleeves, and green scarves most handsome to behold. These were followed by a brave troop in blue doublets adorned with silver lace, carrying banners of red silk fringed with gold. Then came trumpets, and seven footmen in sea-green and silver liveries, bearing banners of blue silk, followed by a troop in grey and blue to the number of two hundred and twenty, and led by the most noble the Earl of Northampton. After various other companies, all brave in apparel, came two trumpets bearing his majesty's arms, followed by the sheriffs' men in red cloaks and silver lace, and by a great body of gentlemen in black velvet coats with gold chains. Next rode six hundred brave citizens, twelve ministers, the king's life guards, led by Sir Gilbert Gerrard, the city marshals with eight footmen, the city waits and officers, the sheriffs and aldermen in scarlet gowns, the maces and

heralds in great splendour, the lord mayor carrying a naked sword in his strong right hand, the Duke of Buckingham, and General Monk, soon to be created Duke of Albermarle.

Now other heralds sound their trumpets with blasts that make all hearts beat quicker; church bells ring far louder than before; voices are raised to their highest pitch, excitement reaches its zenith, for here, mounted on a stately horse caparisoned in royal purple and adorned with gold, rides King Charles himself; on his right hand his brother of York, on his left his brother of Gloucester. Handkerchiefs are waved, flowers are flung before his way, words of welcome fall upon his ear, in answer to which he bows with stately grace, smiles most pleasantly, and gives such signs of delight as 'cheared the hearts of all loyal subjects even to extasie and transportation.' Last of all came five regiments of cavalry, with back, breast, and head piece, which 'diversified the show with delight and terrour.' John Evelyn stood in the Strand and watched the procession pass, when that worthy man thanked God the king had been restored without bloodshed, and by the very army that had

rebelled against him. 'For such a restauration was never mention'd in any history ancient or modern, since the returne of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity ; nor so joyfull a day and so bright ever seene in this nation, this hapning when to expect or effect it was past all human policy.'

For full seven hours this 'most pompous show that ever was' wound its way through the city, until at nine of the clock in the evening it brought his majesty to the palace of Whitehall, where the late king had 'laid down his sacred head to be struck off upon a block,' almost twelve years before. Then the lord mayor and his aldermen took their goodly leave, and the king entered into the banquet hall, where the lords and commons awaited him, and where an address was made to him by the Earl of Manchester, Speaker to the House of Peers, congratulating him on his miraculous preservation and happy restoration to his crown and dignity after so long and so severe a suppression of his just right and title. Likewise his lordship besought his majesty to be the upright assertor of the laws and maintainer of the liberties of his

subjects. 'So,' said the noble earl, 'shall judgment run down like a river, and justice like a mighty stream, and God, the God of your mercy, who hath so miraculously preserved you, will establish your throne in righteousness and peace.' Then the king made a just and brief reply, and retired to supper and to rest.

The worthy citizens, however, were not satisfied that their rejoicements should end here, and 'as soon as night came,' says Dr. Bate, 'an artificial day was begun again, the whole city seeming to be one great light, as, indeed, properly it was a luminary of loyalty, the bonfires continuing till daybreak, fed by a constant supply of wood, and maintained with an equal excess of gladness and fewel.' Wine flowed from public fountains, volleys of shot were discharged from houses of the nobility, drums and other musical instruments played in the streets, citizens danced most joyfully in open places, and the effigy of Cromwell was burned, together with the arms of the Commonwealth, with expressions of great delight.

CHAPTER II.

The story of the king's escape.—He accepts the Covenant and lands in Scotland.—Crowned at Scone.—Proclaimed king at Carlisle.—The battle of Worcester.—Bravery of Charles.—Disloyalty of the Scottish cavalry.—The Royalists defeated.—The king's flight.—Seeks refuge in Boscobel Wood.—The faithful Pendrells.—Striving to cross the Severn.—Hiding in an oak tree.—Sheltered by Master Lane.—Sets out with Mistress Lane.—Perilous escapes.—On the road.—The king is recognised.—Strange adventures.—His last night in England.

THAT King Charles had been miraculously preserved, as my Lord Manchester set forth, there can be no doubt. His courageous efforts to regain the crown at the battle of Worcester, and his subsequent escapes from the vigilant pursuits of the Cromwellian soldiers, would, if set down in justice and with detail, present a story more entertaining than any romance ever written. Here they must of necessity be mentioned with brevity.

In the year 1645, Charles I., having suffered the loss of many great battles, became fearful of the danger which threatened his family and himself. He therefore ordered his son Charles, who had already retired into the west, to seek refuge in the Scilly Isles. The prince complied with his desires, and went from thence to Paris, where his mother, Henrietta Maria, had already taken shelter, and, after a short stay with her, travelled to the Hague. Soon after the king was beheaded, the Scots, who regarded that foul act with great abhorrence, invited Charles to come into their kingdom, provided he accepted certain hard conditions, which left the government of all civil business in the hands of Parliament, and the regulation of all religious matters in charge of the Presbyterians. No other prospect of regaining his rights, and of enabling him to fight for his throne presenting itself, he accepted what was known as the Covenant, and landed in Scotland in 1650. He was received with the respect due to a monarch, but placed under the surveillance forced on a prisoner. The fanatical Presbyterians, jealous of that potent influence which his blithe ways exercised over all with

whom he associated, neither permitted him to attend the council nor command the army; they, however, preached to him incessantly, admonished him of his sins and those of his parents, guarded him as a captive, and treated him as a puppet. Meanwhile Cromwell, being made aware of his presence in the kingdom, advanced at the head of a powerful body into Scotland, fought and won the battle of Dunbar, stormed and captured Leith, and took his triumphal way towards Edinburgh town. Charles was at this time in Perth, and being impatient at his enforced inaction whilst battles were fought in his name, and lives lost in his cause, made his escape from the Covenanters, with the determination of arousing the Royalists who lay in the north. But the Scots soon overtook and recaptured him. However, this decisive action awoke them to a better understanding of the deference due to his position, and therefore they crowned him at Scone on the first day of the year 1651, with much solemnity, and subsequently made him commander of the army.

After spending some months in reorganizing

the troops, he boldly declared his intention of marching into England, and fighting the rebel force. Accordingly, on the 31st of July, 1651, he set out from Sterling with an army of between eleven and twelve thousand men. At Carlisle he was proclaimed king, and a declaration was published in his name, granting free grace and pardon to all his subjects in England, of whatever nature or cause their offences, saving Cromwell, Bradshaw, and Cooke. He then marched to Lancashire, and on the 23rd of August unfurled the royal standard at Worcester, amidst the enthusiastic acclamations of his troops and the loyal demonstrations of the citizens. Weary of civil strife, depressed with fear of Cromwell's severities, and distrustful of the Presbyterians, who chiefly composed the young king's army, the Royalists had not gathered to his standard in such numbers as he had anticipated. His troops, since leaving Scotland, had been reinforced merely by two thousand men ; but Charles had hopes that fresh recruits would join him when news of the rising got noised abroad.

The Republicans were filled with dismay at

the king's determined action, but were prompt to make a counter-move. Accordingly, additional troops were levied, London was left to be defended by volunteers, and Cromwell, heading an army of thirty-four thousand men, marched against the Royalists. On the 28th of August, they drew near Worcester, and on the 3rd of September the battle was fought which will remain for ever famous in the annals of civil war. On the morning of that day, the king, ascending the cathedral tower, saw the enemy's forces advancing towards Worcester: before reaching the city, it was necessary they should cross the Severn, and, in order to prevent this if possible, Charles hurried down and directed that some of his troops, under the command of Montgomery, should defend Powick Bridge; whilst he stationed others under Colonel Pitscottie lower down, at a point of the river towards which the republicans were marching with pontoons, by means of which they intended to cross. The young king, hopeful of victory and full of enthusiasm, rode speedily out at the head of his troops and placed them at their various stations. Scarcely had he done so, when he became aware

that the main body of the enemy had opened an artillery fire on Fort Royal, which guarded the city on the south-east side. He therefore galloped back in hot haste to headquarters, and reconnoitred the advanced posts eastward of the city, in full front of the enemy's fire. Meanwhile Montgomery, having exhausted his ammunition, was obliged to retreat in disorder from Powick Bridge, followed by the Cromwellians. The king now courageously resolved to attack the enemy's camp at Perry Wood, which lay south-east of Worcester. Accordingly he marched out with the flower of his Highland infantry and the English cavaliers, led by the Dukes of Hamilton and Buckingham. Cromwell, seeing this, hastened to intercept the king's march, whereon a fierce battle was bravely fought on either side. Nothing could be more valiant than the conduct of the young king, who showed himself wholly regardless of his life in the fierce struggle for his rights. Twice was his horse shot under him ; but increasing danger seemed but to animate him to greater daring. So bravely did his army fight likewise, that the Republicans at first gave way before them. For

upwards of four hours the engagement raged with great fierceness. Cromwell subsequently declared it was 'as stiff a contest as he had ever seen,' and his experience was great. Success seemed now to crown the Royalists, anon to favour the Roundheads. The great crisis of the day at length arrived: the Cromwellians began to waver and give way just as the Royalist cavalry had expended their ammunition; the king had still three thousand Scotch cavalry in the rear under the command of Leslie, who had not yet been called into action. He therefore ordered them to advance; but, to his horror, not one of these men, who had looked on as passive spectators, made a movement. In this hour, when victory or defeat hung upon a thread, the Scots ignominiously failed their king. Charles instantly saw he was undone. The English cavalry continued to fight bravely, in their desperation using the butt ends of their muskets; but they were gradually compelled to give way before the enemy, who, seeing their condition, had renewed the attack. The Royalists therefore fell back into the city. When the king re-entered Worcester he saw before him a scene of the most

disastrous confusion. Royalists and Republicans encountered and fought each other in every thoroughfare ; the air was filled with the report of muskets, the imprecations of soldiers, the groans of wounded men, and the shrieks of women. The streets ran red with blood. At such a sight his heart sank within him, but, manning himself for fresh efforts, he called his troops together and sought to incite them with courage to make a final charge. ' I would rather,' he cried out, ' you would shoot me than keep me alive to see the sad consequences of this fatal day.' Those who heard him were disheartened : it was too late to retrieve their heavy losses : most of them refused to heed him ; many sought safety in flight. Then the young king's friends, gathering round, besought him to make good his escape ; and accordingly, with a sad heart, he rode out of St. Martin's Gate humbled and defeated. In order to cover his retreat from the enemy now advancing, my Lord Cleveland, Sir James Hamilton, Colonel Careless, and some other worthy gentlemen defended Sudbury Gate, towards which the main body of the Republicans approached. They held this position a

sufficient time to gain the end for which it was undertaken. But at length the Republicans, forcing open the gate, marched upon the fort, defended by fifteen hundred soldiers under Colonel Drummond. This loyal man refusing to surrender, the fort was speedily stormed, and he and those of his men who survived the attack were mercilessly put to the sword.

Dr. George Bate gives a quaint and striking picture of what followed. 'Deplorable and sad was the countenance of the town after that,' writes he; 'the victorious soldiers on the one hand killing, breaking into houses, plundering, sacking, roaring, and threatening; on the other hand, the subdued flying, turning their backs to be cut and slashed, and with outstretched hands begging quarter; some, in vain resisting, sold their lives as dear as they could, whilst the citizens to no purpose prayed, lamented, and bewailed. All the streets are strewed with dead and mangled bodies. Here were to be seen some that begged relief, and then again others weltering in their own gore, who desired that at once an end might be put to their lives and miseries. The dead bodies lay unburied for the space of

three days or more, which was a loathsome spectacle that increased the horror of the action.'

Concerning his subsequent dangers and narrow escapes, the king, in his days of peace and prosperity, was wont to discourse at length, for they had left impressions on his mind which lasted through life. Edward Hyde, Lord Clarendon, his Lord High Chancellor, Dr. George Bate, his learned physician, and Samuel Pepys, Esquire, sometime Surveyor-General to the Victualling Office, have preserved the records of that time of peril, as told by his majesty. True, their various stories differ in minor details, but they agree in principal facts. The king had not ridden many miles from Worcester when he found himself surrounded by about four thousand of his army, including the Scots under the command of Leslie. Though they would not fight for him, they were ready enough to fly with him. At first he thought of betaking himself to Scotland; but having had sad proof of the untrustworthy character of those with whom he travelled, he feared they would further betray him if pursued by the enemy. He therefore

resolved to reach London before the news of his defeat arrived thither, and make his escape from thence ; but this scheme presented many difficulties. Amongst the persons of quality who accompanied him were my Lord Duke of Buckingham, the Earls of Derby and Lauderdale, and the Lords Wilmot and Talbot. During their journey it fell from my Lord Derby's lips, that when he had been defeated at Wigan, one Pendrell, an honest labourer and a Papist, had sheltered him in Boscobel House, not far distant from where they then rode. Hearing this, the king resolved to trust this same faithful fellow, and for the present seek such refuge as Pendrell could afford. It was not easy, however, for his majesty to escape the Scots ; but when night came, he and his gentlemen slipped away from the high road, which the others continued to pursue, and made for Boscobel Wood, led by Charles Giffard, a loyal gentleman and true. The house they sought was situated between Tong Castle and Brewood, in a woody place most fitting for retreat ; it was, moreover, six and twenty miles from Worcester, and stood in Shropshire, on the borders of Staffordshire.

In order to gain this haven of rest, it was necessary for them to pass through Stourbridge, where a troop of the Republican army lay quartered. Midnight had fallen ere they reached the town, which was now wrapt in darkness, and was, moreover, perfectly still. The king and his friends, dismounting, led their horses through the echoing streets as softly as possible, being filled the while with dire apprehensions. Safely leaving it, they rode into the wood until they came to the old convent of Whiteladies, once the home of Cistercian nuns, who had long since been driven from their peaceful retreat. The house was now the habitation of the Giffard family, with whom George Pendrell lived as servant. On being aroused, he came forth with a lantern, and admitted them, when Charles Giffard made known to him in whose presence he stood, and acquainted him with their situation. Thereupon the honest fellow promised to serve the king faithfully, and sent immediately for his brothers four : William, who took charge of Boscobel House, not far removed ; Humphrey, who was miller at Whiteladies ; Richard, who lived at Hobbal Grange ; and John, who was a

woodman, and dwelt hard by. When they had all arrived, Lord Derby showed them the king's majesty, and besought them for God's sake, for their loyalty's sake, and as they valued all that was high and sacred, to keep him safe, and forthwith seek some place of decent shelter where he might securely lurk. This they readily swore to compass, though they risked their lives in the attempt.

It being considered that greater safety lay in the king being unattended, his loyal friends departed from him with many prayers and hopes for a joyful reunion: all of them save my Lords Wilmot and Buckingham set out to join Leslie's company, that they might proceed together towards Scotland; but they had not marched six miles in company with the Scots when these three thousand men and more were overtaken and were routed by a single troop of the enemy's horse, and my Lord Derby, being taken, was condemned and executed. Lords Wilmot and Buckingham set out for London, to which place it was agreed the king should follow them.

When his majesty's friends had departed, the

Pendrells undertook to disguise him ; towards which end one of them cut the long locks reaching his shoulders, another rubbed his hands and face with dust, and a third brought him a suit of clothes. 'The habit of the king,' says Pepys, 'was a very greasy old grey steeple-crowned hat, with the brims turned up, without lining or hatband, the sweat appearing two inches deep through it round the band place ; a green cloth jump-coat, threadbare, even to the threads being worn white, and breeches of the same, with long knees down to the garter ; with an old sweaty leathern doublet, a pair of white flannel stockings next to his legs, and upon them a pair of old green yarn stockings, all worn and darned at the knees, with their feet cut off : his shoes were old, all slashed for the ease of his feet, with little rolls of paper between his toes to keep them from galling ; and an old coarse shirt, patched both at the neck and hands, of that very coarse sort which go by the name of nogging shirts.'

When Charles was attired in this fashion, Richard Pendrell opened a back door and led him out into the wood ; not a moment too soon,

for within half an hour Colonel Ashenhurst, with a company of Cromwell's soldiers, rode up to Whiteladies, rushed into the house, searched every chamber and secret place, pulled down the wainscoting, and otherwise devastated the mansion in the search for the king. A damp cold September morning now lengthened to a day of gloom and depression. Rain fell in heavy torrents, dripped from the leafless branches of trees, and saturated the thick undergrowth and shrubs where his majesty lay hidden. Owing to the condition of the weather, the soldiers neglected to search Boscobel Wood; and, after uttering many threats and imprecations, withdrew from Whiteladies. When he considered himself quite alone, Richard Pendrell ventured forth, taking with him a billhook, that if observed he might seem engaged in trimming hedges; and drawing near the spot where his majesty lay, assured him of his safety. Later on he besought an old woman, his neighbour, to take victuals into the wood to a labourer she would find there. Without hesitation the good woman carried some eggs, bread, butter, and milk towards the spot indicated to her. On

seeing her the king was much alarmed, fearing recognition and dreading her garrulity; wherefore he said to her: 'Can you be true to anyone who hath served the king?' Upon which she readily made answer: 'Yes, sir; I'd die sooner than betray you.' Being reassured at this, he ate heartily.

When night fell, Richard brought him into the house again, and the king, now abandoning his intention of proceeding to London, expressed his anxiety to reach Wales, where he had many friends, and which afforded him ready opportunities of escaping from the kingdom. Pendrell expressed himself willing to conduct him thither. Accordingly, about nine of the clock, they set out with the determination of crossing the Severn, intending to pass over a ferry between Bridgenorth and Shrewsbury. When they had walked some hours they drew near a water-mill. 'We could see the miller,' said the king in relating the story, 'as I believe, sitting at the mill-door, he being in white clothes, it being a very dark night. He called out sturdily, "Who goes there?" Upon which Richard Pendrell answered, "Neighbours going

home," or suchlike words. Whereupon the miller cried out: "If you be neighbours, stand, or I will knock you down." Upon which, we believing there was company in the house, Richard bade me follow him close, and he ran to a gate that went up a dirty lane up a hill. The miller cried out: "Rogues—rogues!" And thereupon some men came out of the mill after us, which I believe were soldiers; so we fell a-running, both of us up the lane as long as we could run, it being very deep and very dirty, till at last I bade him leap over a hedge, and lie still to hear if anybody followed us—which we did, and continued lying down upon the ground about half an hour, when, hearing nobody come, we continued our way.'

This led to the house of an honest gentleman named Woolfe, living at Madeley, who was a Catholic, and loyal to his king, and as such was known to the Pendrells. When they drew near to his house, Richard, leaving his majesty in a field, went forward and asked this worthy man if he would shelter one who had taken part in the battle of Worcester; whereon he made answer he would not venture his neck

for any man unless it were the king himself, upon which Pendrell made known to him it was his majesty who sought refuge from him. Mr. Woolfe came out immediately and carried the king by a back way into a barn, where he hid him for the day, it being considered unsafe for him to stay a longer period there, as two companies of militia were at that time stationed in the town, and were very likely to search the house at any minute. Moreover he advised his majesty by no means to adventure crossing the Severn, as the strictest guard was then kept at the ferries to prevent any Royalist fugitives from escaping into Wales. The king was therefore obliged to retrace his steps, and now sought Boscobel House, not far distant from his first resting-place of Whiteladies. Arriving there, he remained secreted in the wood, whilst Richard went to see if soldiers were in occupation of the dwelling. There was no one there, however, but Colonel Careless, the same good man and true who had helped to keep Sudbury Gate whilst Charles made his escape.

The Colonel had been hiding in the forest, and, being sore pressed by hunger, had come to beg

a little bread. Being informed where the king was, he came forth with great joy, and, the house not being considered a safe refuge, they both climbed into the branches of a leafy oak, situated in an open part of the wood, from whence they could see all round them. They carried with them some bread and cheese and small beer, and stayed there that day. 'While we were in the tree,' says the king, 'we saw soldiers going up and down in the thicket of the wood, searching for persons escaped, we seeing them now and then peeping out of the wood.' When this danger had passed away, the king, worn out by his sore fatigues, laid his head on his friend's breast and slept in his arms. At night they descended, and going to Boscobel House, were shown a secret hiding-place, such as were then to be found in the mansions of all Catholic families, called the priests' hole; a little confined closet built between two walls, in the principal stack of chimneys, and having a couple of exits for the better escape of those compelled to seek its shelter. Here the king rested in peace for a day and a night.

Meanwhile Humphrey Pendrell went into

Shifnal to pay his taxes; and it being known he had come from Whiteladies, he was questioned closely as to whether he knew aught of Charles Stuart. On stoutly denying all knowledge of him, he was told that any man who discovered him would gain a thousand pounds, but he that sheltered him would suffer death without mercy; these being the terms of a proclamation just issued. This the honest miller on his return narrated to the king, swearing roundly he would run all risks for his sake. It chanced at this time one of the Pendrells heard that my Lord Wilmot, who had not been able to make his way to London, was hiding in a very secure place, at the house of a gentleman named Whitegrave, about seven miles distant. This coming to the king's knowledge, he became anxious to see his faithful friend and hold communication with him. Accordingly one of the Pendrells was despatched to request Lord Wilmot to meet his majesty that night, in a field close by Mr. Whitegrave's house. And the time of night being come, the king was impatient of delay; but his feet were sore from the rough shoes he had worn on his journey, so that he

was scarce able to walk ; therefore he was mounted on Humphrey's mill-horse, and, the four loyal brothers forming a guard, they directed their way towards Moseley. The king's eagerness to see Wilmot being great, he complained of the horse's slow pace. ' Can you blame him, my liege,' said Humphrey, who loved a jest, ' that he goes heavily, having the weight of three kingdoms on his back ?'

When they had travelled with him a great part of the journey it was thought safer three of them should withdraw themselves. They therefore turned away ; but scarcely had they gone when the king, who, being lost in thought, had remained unconscious of their departure, suddenly stopped, and caused John, who remained, to speedily summon them back. When they returned he gave them his hand to kiss, and, with that charm of manner which never failed in winning friends, said to them sadly, ' My sorrows make me forget myself. I earnestly thank you all.'

They kissed his hand heartily, and prayed God to save him. In the days of his prosperity he remembered their kindness and rewarded their loyalty.

Arriving at the trysting place the king found Mr. Whitegrave, a Benedictine monk named Father Huddleston, Sir John Preston, and his brother awaiting him. It may be mentioned here this monk was destined, many years later, to play an important part in the closing scene of his majesty's life. Mr. Whitegrave conducted Charles with great show of respect to his house, where the king spoke with my Lord Wilmot, feasted well, and rested safe that night. Next morning the worthy host had private notice given that a company of soldiers were on their way to arrest him as one who had served in the king's army. He, being innocent of this charge, did not avoid them, but received them boldly at his door, spoke confidently in his own defence, and referred them to the testimony of his neighbours, whereon they departed quietly.

It was feared, however, the house was no longer safe, and that another refuge had best be sought for his Majesty. Therefore, Father Huddleston informed the king of an honest gentleman, the owner of a fair estate some six miles removed, who was generous and exceedingly

beloved, and the eldest justice of peace in the county of Stafford. This gentleman was named Lane, 'a very zealous Protestant, yet he lived with so much civility and candour towards the Catholics, that they would all trust him as much as they would any of their own profession.' The king, however, not being willing to surprise this worthy man, immediately despatched the Benedictine to make certain of his welcome; receiving due assurances of which he and Lord Wilmot set out by night for Master Lane's mansion, where they were heartily received, and where Charles rested some days in blessed security. Knowing, however, in what risk he placed those who sheltered him, and how vigilant the pursuit after him, he became most anxious for his safe delivery out of the kingdom. To this end it was desirable he should draw near the west coast, and await an opportunity of sailing from thence for France.

The members of Master Lane's family then living with him consisted of a son and a daughter: the former a man of fearless courage and integrity, the latter a gentlewoman of good wit and discretion, as will be seen hereafter. Consulting

amongst themselves as to the best means of compassing the king's escape, it was resolved Mistress Lane should visit a kinswoman of hers with whom she had been bred, that had married one Norton, and was now residing within five miles of Bristol. It was likewise decided she should ride on her journey thence behind the king, he being habited in her father's livery, and acting as her servant ; and for greater safety her sister and her sister's husband were to accompany them on the road. Mistress Jane Lane then procured from a colonel of the rebel army a passport for herself and her servant, her sister and her brother-in-law, to travel without molestation to her cousin Mistress Norton, who was ready to lie in. With this security Jane set out, her brother bearing them company part of the way, with a hawk upon his fist and two or three spaniels at his heels, which warranted him keeping the king and his friends in sight without seeming to be of their company.

The first day's journey was not accomplished without an exciting incident. The horse ridden by Mistress Lane and the king—now bearing the name of William Jackson—lost a shoe ; and

being come to Bromsgrove, he must dismount and lead the animal to the village blacksmith.

‘As I was holding my horse’s foot,’ said his majesty, when narrating the story to Mr. Pepys, ‘I asked the smith what news. He told me that there was no news that he knew of, since the good news of the beating the rogues of the Scots. I asked him whether there was none of the English taken that joined with the Scots. He answered he did not hear if that rogue, Charles Stuart, were taken ; but some of the others, he said, were taken. I told him that if that rogue were taken, he deserved to be hanged more than all the rest, for bringing in the Scots. Upon which he said I spoke like an honest man ; and so we parted.’

At the end of the first day’s journey they were met by Lord Wilmot at the inn ; and he continued to join them wherever they rested at night, without appearing to travel with them by day. Mistress Lane took all possible care to guard the king against recognition, stating at every house of accommodation where they tarried, he was ‘a neighbour’s son whom her father had lent her to ride before her in hope that he would

the sooner recover from a quartan ague with which he had been miserably afflicted, and was not yet free.' Which story served as sufficient excuse for his going to bed betimes, and so avoiding the company of servants. At the end of three days they arrived at their destination. Jane Lane was warmly received by her cousin, and the whole party made heartily welcome. Jane, however, did not entrust her secret to Mistress Norton's keeping, but repeated her tale of the good youth being newly recovered from ague, and desired a chamber might be provided for him, and a good fire made that he might retire early to bed. Her desires being obeyed, the king withdrew, and was served with an excellent good supper by the butler, a worthy fellow, named Pope, who had been a trooper in the army of Charles I., of blessed memory.

'The next morning,' said the king, continuing his strange story, 'I arose pretty early, having a very good stomach, and went to the buttery-hatch to get my breakfast, where I found Pope and two or three other men in the room, and we all fell to eating bread and butter, to which he gave us very good ale and sack. And as I was

sitting there, there was one that looked like a country fellow sat just by me, who, talking, gave so particular an account of the battle of Worcester to the rest of the company that I concluded he must be one of Cromwell's soldiers. But I, asking how he came to give so good an account of that battle, he told me he was in the King's regiment, by which I thought he meant one Colonel King's regiment. But questioning him further, I perceived he had been in my regiment of Guards, in Major Broughton's company, —that was my Major in the battle. I asked him what kind of man I was. To which he answered by describing exactly both my clothes and my horse, and then, looking upon me, he told me that the king was at least three fingers taller than I. Upon which I made what haste I could out of the buttery, for fear he should indeed know me, as being more afraid when I knew he was one of our own soldiers than when I took him for one of the enemy's. So Pope and I went into the hall, and just as we came into it Mistress Norton was coming by through it; upon which I, plucking off my hat and standing with it in my hand as she passed by,

Pope looked very earnestly in my face. But I took no notice of it, but put on my hat again, and went away, walking out of the house into the field.'

When he returned, however, the butler followed him into a private room, and going down on his stiff knees, said, with tears in his old eyes, he was rejoiced to see his majesty in safety. The king affected to laugh at him, and asked him what he meant; but Pope told him he knew him well, for before he was a trooper in his father's service he had been falconer to Sir Thomas Jermyn, groom of the bedchamber to the king when he was a boy. Charles saw it was useless longer to deny himself, and therefore said he believed him to be a very honest man, and besought he would not reveal what he knew to anyone. This the old man readily promised, and faithfully kept his word. Having spent a couple of days at Norton's, the king, by advice of Lord Wilmot, went to the house of a true friend and loyal man, one Colonel Windham, who lived at Trent. This town was notable as a very hotbed of republicanism; a proof of which was afforded his majesty on the

very day of his entrance. As he rode into the principal street, still disguised as a waiting man to Mistress Lane, he heard a great ringing of bells, and the tumult of many voices, and saw a vast concourse of people gathered in the church-yard close by. On asking the cause he was informed one of Cromwell's troopers was telling the people he had killed Charles Stuart, whose buff coat he then wore ; whereon the rebels rang the church bells, and were about to make a great bonfire for joy.

Having brought him to Trent, Mistress Lane returned home, carrying with her the king's friendship and gratitude, of which he gave her ample proof when he came unto the throne. Charles stayed at Colonel Windham's over a week, whilst that gallant man was secretly striving to hire a ship for his majesty's safe transportation into France. Presently succeeding in this object, the king, yet wearing his livery, and now riding before Mistress Judith Coningsby, cousin of Colonel Windham, started with high hopes for Lyme ; but at the last moment the captain of the vessel failed him, and he was again left in a state of painful uncertainty and danger. Lord

Wilmot was sent to ascertain the cause of this disappointment, and for greater safety the king rode on to Burport with his friends. Being come to the outskirts of the town, they were alarmed at finding the streets in a state of confusion, and full of Cromwell's soldiers, fifteen hundred of whom were about to embark for Jersey. His majesty's coolness and presence of mind did not fail him; he resolved to ride boldly into the town, and hire a chamber at the best inn. The yard of the hostelry was likewise crowded with troopers; but this did not dismay his majesty.

'I alighted,' said he, 'and taking the horses, thought it the best way to go blundering in among them, and lead them through the middle of the soldiers into the stable; which I did, and they were very angry with me for my rudeness. As soon as I came into the stable I took the bridle off the horses, and called the ostler to me to help me, and to give the horses some oats. And as the hostler was helping me to feed the horses, "Sure, sir," says he, "I know your face?" which was no very pleasant question to me. But I thought the best way was to ask him where he had lived, or whether he had always lived there

or no. He told me that he was but newly come thither; that he was born in Exeter, and had been ostler in an inn there, hard by one Mr. Potter's, a merchant in whose house I had lain in the time of the war. So I thought it best to give the fellow no further occasion of thinking where he had seen me, for fear he should guess right at last; therefore I told him, "Friend, certainly you have seen me then at Mr. Potter's, for I served him a good while above a year." "Oh," says he, "then I remember you a boy there;" and with that was put off from thinking any more on it, but desired that we might drink a pot of beer together, which I excused by saying that I must go wait on my master, and get his dinner ready for him; but told him that my master was going to London, and would return about three weeks hence, when he would be there, and I would not fail to drink a pot with him.'

The king and his friends, having dined at the inn, got word that the master of the ship, suspecting it was some dangerous employment he had been hired for, absolutely refused to fulfil his contract. Therefore they, being sad at heart and fearful, retraced their steps to Trent, and

presently his majesty went further into Sussex, and abode with a staunch Royalist, one Colonel Gunter, who resided within four miles of Salisbury. This excellent man at last succeeded in hiring a ship to carry away the king, and so Charles made another journey to Brighthelmstone, where he met the captain of the vessel and the merchant that had hired her on behalf of Colonel Gunter, both of whom had been kept in ignorance of their future passenger's identity. Arriving at Brighthelmstone, they entered an inn and ordered supper, during which the captain more than once looked hard at the king. And that meal being ended, the captain called the merchant aside and said he was not dealt with fairly, inasmuch as he had not been told the king was the person to be conveyed from thence. The merchant, not being so wise as the master, denied such was the case; but the honest fellow told him not to be troubled. 'For I think,' said he, 'I do God and my country good service in preserving the king: and by the grace of God I will venture my life and all for him, and set him safely on shore, if I can, in France.'

Nor was this the last of his majesty's numer-

ous risks, for being presently left alone, he stood thoughtful and somewhat melancholy by the fire, resting one hand on a chair ; and the landlord, coming in and seeing him engaged in this manner, softly advanced, suddenly kissed the king's hand, and said, ' God bless you, wherever you go.' Charles started, and would have denied himself; but the landlord cried out, ' 'Fore God your majesty may trust me ; and,' he added, ' I have no doubt, before I die, to be a lord, and my wife a lady.'

That night, the last his majesty was to spend in England for many years, he was sad and depressed. The scenes of bloodshed he had witnessed, the imminent dangers he had escaped, were vividly present to his mind. The past was fraught with horror ; the future held no hope. Though a king, he was about to become an outcast from his realm. Surmising his thoughts, his companions sought to cheer him. Now the long-desired moment of escape was at hand, no one thought of repose. The little vessel in which he intended sailing lay dry upon the shore, the tide being at low water. The king and his friends, the merchant, the captain, and the land-

lord, sat in the well lighted cosy parlour of the seaport inn, smoking, playing cards, telling stories and drinking good ale.

With all such diversions the hours wore heavily away. Their noisy joviality had an undercurrent of sadness; jokes failed to amuse; laughter seemed forced; words, mirthful in leaving the lips, sounded ominous on reaching the ear. At four o'clock the captain rose to survey his ship, and presently returned saying the tide had risen. Thereon the king and his friends prepared to depart. A damp, chilly November fog hung over the sea, hiding its wide expanse without deadening its monotonous moan. A procession of black figures leaving the inn sped noiselessly through darkness. Arriving at the shore, those who were not to accompany his majesty knelt and kissed his hand. Then he, with Lord Wilmot and the captain, climbed on board the vessel and entered the cabin. The fog had turned to rain. Four hours later, the tide being favourable, the ship sailed out of port, and in due time the king was safely landed in France.

CHAPTER III.

Celebration of the King's return.—Those who flocked to Whitehall. — My Lord Cleveland's gentlemen. — Sir Thomas Allen's supper.—Touching for King's evil.—That none might lose their labour.—The man with the fungus nose.—The memory of the regicides.—Cromwell's effigy.—Ghastly scene at Tyburn.—The King's clemency. — The Coronation procession.—Sights and scenes by the way.—His Majesty is crowned.

THE return of the king and his court was a signal for universal joy throughout the nation in general and the capital in particular. For weeks and months subsequent to his majesty's triumphal entry, the town did not subside from its condition of excitement and revelry to its customary quietude and sobriety. Feasts by day were succeeded by entertainments at night; 'and, under colour of drinking the king's health,' says Bishop Burnet, 'there were great disorder and much riot.'

It seemed as if the people could not sufficiently express their delight at the presence of the young king amongst them, or satisfy their desire of seeing him. When clad in rich velvets and costly lace, adorned with many jewels and waving feathers, he walked in Hyde Park attended by an 'abundance of gallantry,' or went to Whitehall Chapel, where 'the organs and singing-men in surplices' were first heard by Mr. Pepys, a vast crowd of loyal subjects attended him on his way. Likewise, when, preceded by heralds, he journeyed by water in his barge to open Parliament, the river was crowded with innumerable boats, and the banks lined with a great concourse anxious for sight of him. Nor were his subjects satisfied by the glimpses obtained of him on such occasions; they must needs behold their king surrounded by the insignia of royalty in the palace of his ancestors, and flocked thither in numbers. 'The eagerness of men, women, and children to see his majesty, and kisse his hands was so greate,' says Evelyn, 'that he had scarce leisure to eate for some dayes, coming as they did from all parts of the nation: and the king

being as willing to give them that satisfaction, would have none kept out, but gave free access to all sorts of people.' Indeed his loyal subjects were no less pleased with him than he with them; and in faith he was sorry, he declared, in that delicate strain of irony that ran like a bright thread throughout the whole pattern of his speech, he had not come over before, for every man he encountered was glad to see him.

Day after day, week after week, the Palace of Whitehall presented a scene of ceaseless bustle. Courtiers, ambassadors, politicians, soldiers, and citizens crowded the antechambers, flocked through the galleries, and tarried in the court-yards. Deputations from all the shires and chief towns in the three kingdoms, bearing messages of congratulation and loyalty, were presented to the king. First of all came the worshipful lord mayor, aldermen, and council of the city of London, in great pomp and state; when the common-sergeant made a speech to his majesty respecting the affection of the city towards him, and the lord mayor, on hospitable thoughts intent, besought the honour of his company to dinner, the which Charles promised him most

readily. And the same day the commissioners from Ireland presented themselves, headed by Sir James Barry, who delivered himself of a fine address regarding the love his majesty's Irish subjects bore him; as proof of which he presented the monarch with a bill for twenty thousand pounds, that had been duly accepted by Alderman Thomas Viner, a right wealthy man and true. Likewise came the deputy steward and burgesses of the city of Westminster, arrayed in the glory of new scarlet gowns; and the French, Italian, and Dutch ministers, when Monsieur Stoope pronounced an harangue with great eloquence. Also the vice-chancellor of the University of Oxford, with divers doctors, bachelors of divinity, proctors, and masters of arts of the same learned university, who, having first met at the Temple Church, went by two and two, according to their seniority, to Essex House, that they might wait on the most noble the Marquis of Hertford, then chancellor. Accompanied by him, and preceded by eight esquires and yeomen beadles, having their staves, and three of them wearing gold chains, they presented themselves before

the king, and spoke him words of loyalty and greeting. The heads of the colleges and halls of Cambridge, with some masters of arts, in like manner journeyed to Whitehall, when Dr. Love delivered a learned Latin oration, expressive of their devotion to royalty in the person of their most illustrious monarch.

Amongst others came, one day, my Lord Cleveland at the head of a hundred gentlemen, many of them being officers who had formerly served under him, and other gentlemen who had ridden to meet the king when coming unto his own ; and having arrived at Whitehall, they knelt down in the matted gallery, when his majesty ‘was pleased to walk along,’ says *Mercurius Publicus*, ‘and give everyone of them the honour to kiss his hand, which favour was so highly received by them, that they could no longer stifle their joy, but as his majesty was walking out (a thing thought unusual at court) they brake out into a loud shouting.’

Then the nobility entertained the king and his royal brothers with much magnificence, his Excellency Lord General Monk first giving, at his residence in the Cockpit, a great supper,

after which 'he entertained his majesty with several sorts of musick;' next, Earl Pembroke gave a rare banquet; also the Duke of Buckingham, my Lord Lumley, and many others. Nor was my lord mayor, Sir Thomas Allen, behindhand in extending hospitality to the king, whom he invited to sup with him. This feast, having no connection with the civic entertainments, was held at good Sir Thomas's house. The royal brothers of York and Gloucester were likewise bidden, together with several of the nobility and gentry of high degree. Previous to supper being served, the lord mayor brought his majesty a napkin dipped in rose-water, and offered it kneeling; when his majesty had wiped his hands, he sat down at a table raised by an ascent, the Duke of York on his right hand, and the Duke of Gloucester on his left. They were served with three several courses, at each of which the tablecloth was shifted, and at every dish which his majesty or the dukes tasted, the napkins were moreover changed. At another table in the same room sat his Excellency the Lord General, the Duke of Buckingham, the Marquis of Ormond, the Earl

of Oxford, Earl of Norwich, Earl of St. Albans, Lords De la Ware, Sands, Berkeley, and several other of the nobility, with knights and gentlemen of great quality. Sir John Robinson, alderman of London, proposed his majesty's health, which was pledged standing by all present. His majesty was the while entertained with a variety of rare music. This supper was given on the 16th of June; and a couple of weeks later, on the 5th of July, the king went 'with as much pompe and splendour as any earthly prince could do to the greate Citty feast, the first they had invited him to since his returne.'

But whilst entertainments were given, and diversions occupied the town, Charles was called upon to touch for the evil, an affliction then most prevalent throughout the kingdom. According to a time-honoured belief which obtained until the coming of George I., when faith in the divinity of kings was no longer possible to the most ignorant, the monarch's touch was credited with healing this most grievous disease. Majesty in those days was sacred, and superstition rife. Accordingly we read in *Mercurius Publicus*

that, 'The kingdom having for a long time, by reason of his majesty's absence, been troubled with the evil, great numbers flocked for cure. Saturday being appointed by his majesty to touch such as were so troubled, a great company of poor afflicted creatures were met together, many brought in chairs and baskets ; and being appointed by his majesty to repair to the banqueting-house, the king sat in a chair of state, where he stroked all that were brought to him, and then put about each of their necks a white ribbon with an angel of gold on it. In this manner his majesty stroked above six hundred ; and such was his princely patience and tenderness to the poor afflicted creatures, that though it took up a long time, the king, being never weary of well doing, was pleased to make inquiry whether there were any more that had not been touched. After prayers were ended the Duke of Buckingham brought a towel, and the Earl of Pembroke a basin and ewer, who, after they had made their obeysance to his majesty, kneeled down till his majesty had washed.'

This was on the 23rd of June, a few days earlier than the date fixed by Evelyn as that

on which the king first began 'to touch for ye evil.' A week later we find he stroked as many as two hundred and fifty persons. Friday was then appointed as the day for those suffering from this disease to come before the king ; it was moreover decided that only two hundred persons should be presented each week ; and these were first to repair to Mr. Knight, his majesty's surgeon, living at the Cross Guns, in Russell Street, Covent Garden, over against the Rose tavern, for tickets of admission. 'That none might lose their labour,' the same Mr. Knight made it known to the public he would be at home on Wednesdays and Thursdays, from two till six of the clock ; and if any person of quality should send for him he would wait upon them at their lodgings. The disease must indeed have been rife: week after week those afflicted continued to present themselves, and we read that, towards the end of July, 'notwithstanding all discouragements by the hot weather and the multitude of sick and infirm people, his majesty abated not one of his accustomed number, but touched full two hundred: an high conviction of all such physicians, surgeons, and apothecaries

that pretend self-preservation when the languishing patient requires their assistance.' Indeed, there were some who placed boundless faith in the king's power of healing by touch; amongst whom was one Avis Evans, whom Aubrey, in his 'Miscellanies,' records 'had a fungus nose, and said it was revealed to him that the king's hand would cure him. And at the first coming of King Charles II. into St. James's Park, he kissed the king's hand, and rubbed his nose with it, which disturbed the king, but cured him.'

The universal joy which filled the nation at the restoration of his majesty was accompanied, as might be expected, by bitter hatred towards the leaders of Republicanism, especially towards such as had condemned the late king to death. The chief objects of popular horror now, however, lay in their graves; but the sanctity of death was neither permitted to save their memories from vituperation nor their remains from molestation. Accordingly, through many days in June the effigy of Cromwell, which had been crowned with a royal diadem, draped with a purple mantle, in Somerset House,

and afterwards borne with all imaginable pomp to Westminster Abbey, was now exposed at one of the windows at Whitehall with a rope fixed round its neck, by way of hinting at the death which the original deserved. But this mark of execration was not sufficient to satisfy the public mind, and seven months later, on the 30th of January, 1661, the anniversary of the murder of Charles I., the bodies of Oliver Cromwell, Henry Ireton, and John Bradshaw were taken from their resting-places in Westminster Abbey, and drawn on hurdles to Tyburn, the well-known site of public executions. 'All the way the universal outcry and curses of the people went along with them,' says *Mercurius Publicus*. 'When these three carcasses arrived at Tyburn, they were pulled out of their coffins, and hanged at the several angles of that triple tree, where they hung till the sun was set; after which they were taken down, their heads cut off, and their loathsome trunks thrown into a deep hole under the gallows. The heads of those three notorious regicides, Oliver Cromwell, John Bradshaw, and Ireton, are set upon poles on the top of

Westminster Hall by the common hangman. Bradshaw placed in the middle (over that part where the monstrous high court of justice sat), Cromwell and his son-in-law Ireton on either side of Bradshaw.'

Before this ghastly execution took place, Parliament had brought to justice such offenders against the late king's government and life as were in its power. According to the declaration made by the king at Breda, a full and general pardon was extended to all rebellious subjects, excepting such persons as should be hereafter excepted by Parliament. By reason of this clause, some who had been most violent in their persecution of royalty were committed to the Tower before the arrival of his majesty, others fled from the country, but had, on another proclamation summoning them to surrender themselves, returned in hope of obtaining pardon. Thirty in all were tried at the Old Bailey before the Commissioners of Oyer and Terminer and a special jury of knights and gentlemen of quality in the county of Middlesex. Twenty-nine of these were condemned to death. The king was singularly free from desires of

revenge ; but many of his council were strangers to clemency, and, under the guise of loyalty to the crown, sought satisfaction for private wrongs by urging severest measures. The monarch, however, shrank from staining the commencement of his reign with bloodshed, and advocated mercy. In a speech delivered to the House of Lords he insisted that, as a point of honour, he was bound to make good the assurances given in his proclamation of Breda, ‘ which if I had not made,’ he continued, ‘ I am persuaded that neither I nor you had now been here. I pray, therefore, let us not deceive those who brought or permitted us to come together ; and I earnestly desire you to depart from all particular animosities *and* revenge or memory of past provocations.’ Accordingly, but ten of those on whom sentence of death had been passed were executed, the remainder being committed to the Tower. That they were not also hung was, according to the mild and merciful Dr. Reeves, Dean of Westminster, ‘ a main cause of God’s punishing the land ’ in the future time. For those destined to suffer, a gibbet was erected at Charing Cross, *that* the traitors might in their last moments see

the spot where the late king had been executed. Having been half hung, they were taken down, when their heads were severed from their trunks and set up on poles at the south-east end of Westminster Hall, whilst their bodies were quartered and exposed upon the city gates.

Burnet tells us that ‘the regicides being odious beyond all expression, the trials and executions of the first who suffered were run to by crowds, and all the people seemed pleased with the sight ;’ yet by degrees these cruel and ghastly spectacles became distasteful and disgusting. ‘I saw not their executions,’ says Evelyn, speaking of four of the traitors who had suffered death on the 17th of October, ‘but met their quarters mangl’d and cutt and reeking as they were brought from the gallows in baskets on the hurdle. Oh the miraculous providence of God !’

Seven months later, the people were diverted by the more cheerful pageant of the king’s coronation, which was conducted with great magnificence. ‘Two days,’ as Heath narrates, ‘were allotted to the consummation of this great and most celebrated action, the wonder, admiration and delight of all persons, both foreign

and domestick.' Early on the morning of the 22nd of May, the day being Monday, the king left Whitehall, by water, for the Tower, in order that he might, according to ancient custom, proceed through the city to Westminster Abbey. It was noticed that it had previously rained for a month together, but on this and the next day 'it pleased God that not one drop fell on the king's triumph.' At ten o'clock, the roaring of cannon announced the procession had left the Tower on its way to Whitehall, where his majesty was to rest the night. The splendour of the pageant was such as had never before been witnessed. The procession was headed by the king's council at law, the masters of chancery and judges, who were followed by the lords according to their rank, so numerous in all, that those who rode first reached Fleet Street, whilst the king was yet in the Tower.

No expense was spared by those who formed part of that wonderful cavalcade, towards rendering their appearance magnificent. Heath tells us it was incredible to think 'what costly cloathes were worn that day. The cloaks could hardly be seen what silk or satin they were made

of, for the gold and silver laces and embroidery that was laid upon them ; the like also was seen on their foot-cloathes. Besides the inestimable value and treasures of diamonds, pearls, and other jewels worn upon their backs and in their hats, not to mention the sumptuous and rich liveries of their pages and footmen, some suits of liveries amounting to fifteen hundred pounds.' Nor had the city hesitated in lavishing vast sums towards decorating the streets through which the king was to pass. Four triumphal arches were erected, that were left standing for a year, in memory of this joyful day. These were 'composed' by John Ogilby, Esquire ; and were respectively erected in Leadenhall Street, the Exchange on Cornhill, Wood Street, and Fleet Street.

The thoroughfares were newly gravelled, railed all the way on both sides, and lined with the city companies and trained bands. The 'relation of his majesty's entertainment passing through the City of London,' as narrated by John Ogilby, and by the papers of the day, is extremely quaint and interesting, but too long for detailed description. During the monarch's progress through 'Crouched Friars,' he was diverted

with music discoursed by a band of eight waits, placed upon a stage. At Aldgate, and at several other stages of his journey, he was received in like manner. Arriving at the great arch in Leadenhall Street, his ears were greeted by sounds of trumpets and drums playing marches; when they had finished, a short scene was enacted on a balcony of the arch, by figures representing Monarchy, Rebellion, and Loyalty. Then the great procession wended its way to the East India House, situate in the same street, when the East India Company took occasion to express their dutiful affections, in a manner 'wholly designed by person of quality.' As the king advanced, a youth in an Indian habit, attended by two blackamoors, knelt down before his majesty's horse, and delivered himself of some execrable verse, which he had no sooner ended than another youth in an Indian vest, mounted on a camel, was led forwards and delivered some lines praying his majesty's subjects might never see the sun set on his crown or dignity. The camel, it may be noticed, bore paniers filled with pearls, spices, and silks, destined to be scattered among the specta-

tors. At Cornhill was a conduit, surmounted by eight wenches representing nymphs—a sight which must have rejoiced the king's heart; and on the tower of this same fountain sounded 'a noise of seven trumpets.' Another fountain flowed with wine and water; and on his way the king heard several speeches delivered by various symbolic figures. One of these, who made a particularly fine harangue, represented the River Thames, as a gentleman whose 'garment loose and flowing, coloured blue and white, waved like water, flags and ozier-like long hair falling o'er his shoulders; his beard long, sea-green, and white.' And so by slow degrees the king came to Temple Bar, where he was entertained by 'a view of a delightful bosage, full of several beasts, both tame and savage, as also several living figures, and music of eight waits.' And having passed through Temple Bar into his ancient and native city of Westminster, the head bailiff in a scarlet robe and the high constable, likewise in scarlet, on behalf of the dean, chapter, city, and liberty, received his majesty with great expressions of joy.

Never had there been so goodly a show, so

grand a procession ; the citizens, still delighted with their young king, had certainly excelled in doing him honour, and some foreigners, Heaton says, ‘acknowledged themselves never to have seen among all the great magnificences of the world any to come near or equal this: even the vaunting French confessed their pomps of the late marriage with the Infanta of Spain, at their majesties’ entrance into Paris, to be inferior in its state, gallantry, and riches unto this most illustrious cavalcade.’ Amongst those who witnessed the procession was Mr. Pepys, who has left us a realistic description, without which this picture would be incomplete. He tells us he arose early on this day ; and the vain fellow says he made himself as fine as could be, putting on his velvet coat for the first time, though he had it made half a year before. ‘And being ready,’ he continues, ‘Sir W. Batten, my lady, and his two daughters, and his son and wife, and Sir W. Pen and his son and I, went to Mr. Young’s, the flag-maker, in Corne-hill ; and there we had a good room to ourselves, with wine and good cake, and saw the show very well. In which it is impossible to relate the glory of this

day, expressed in the clothes of them that rid, and their horses and horses' clothes ; among others, my Lord Sandwich's embroidery and diamonds were ordinary among them. The Knights of the Bath was a brave sight of itself. Remarquable were the two men that represent the two Dukes of Normandy and Aquitane. My Lord Monk rode bare after the king, and led in his hand a spare horse, as being Master of the Horse. The king, in a most rich embroidered suit and cloak, looked most noble. Wadlow, the vintner, at the Devil, in Fleet Street, did lead a fine company of soldiers, all young comely men in white doublets. There followed the Vice-Chamberlain, Sir G. Carteret, and a company of men all like Turkes. The streets all gravelled, and the houses hung with carpets before them, made brave show ; and the ladies out of the windows, one of which, over against us, I took much notice of, and spoke of her, which made good sport among us. So glorious was the show with gold and silver, that we were not able to look at it, our eyes at last being so much overcome with it. Both the king and the Duke of York took notice of us, as they saw us at the window. The show being ended, Mr.

Young did give us a dinner, at which we were very merry, and pleased above imagination at what we have seen.'

The next day, being the feast of St. George, patron of England, the king went in procession from Whitehall to Westminster Abbey, where he was solemnly crowned in the presence of a vast number of peers and bishops. After which, surrounded by the same brilliant company, he passed from the Abbey to Westminster Hall, the way being covered with blue cloth, and lined with spectators to the number of ten thousand. Here his majesty and the lords spiritual and temporal, dined sumptuously, whilst many fine ceremonies were observed, music of all sorts was played, and a great crowd of pretty ladies looked down from the galleries. And when the banquet was over, and a general pardon had been read by the lord chancellor, and the champion had drank out of the king's gold cup, Charles betook himself to Whitehall. Then, after two days of fair weather, it suddenly 'fell a-raining, and thundering and lightning,' says Pepys, 'as I have not seen it do for some years; which people did take great notice of.'

CHAPTER IV.

The King's character.—His proverbial grace.—He tells a story well.—‘A warmth and sweetness of the blood.’—Beautiful Barbara Palmer.—Her intrigue with my Lord Chesterfield.—James, Duke of York.—His early days.—Escape from St. James's.—Fights in the service of France.—Marriage with Anne Hyde.—Sensation at Court.—The Duke of Gloucester's death.—The Princess of Orange.—Schemes against the Duke of York's peace.—The ‘lewd informer.’—Anne Hyde is acknowledged Duchess of York.

WHILST the kingdom was absorbed by movements consequent on its change of government, the court was no less engrossed by incidents relative to the career it had begun. In the annals of court life there are no pages more interesting than those dealing with Charles II. and his friends; in the history of kings there is no more remarkable figure than that of the merry monarch himself.

Returning to rule over a nation which, during

his absence, had been distracted by civil strife, King Charles, young in years, brave in deeds, and surrounded by that halo of romance which misfortune lends its victims, entirely gained the hearts of his subjects. Nature had endowed him with gifts adapted to display qualities that fascinated, and fitted to hide blemishes which repelled. On the one hand his expressive features and shapely figure went far towards creating a charm which his personal grace and courtesy of manner completed ; on the other, his delicate tact screened the heartlessness of his sensualism, whilst his surface sympathies hid the barrenness of his cynicism.

With the coolness and courage he had shown in danger, the shrewdness and wit he continually evinced, and the varied capacities he certainly possessed, Charles II. might have made his reign illustrious, had not his love of ease and detestation of business rendered him indifferent to all things so long as he was free to follow his desires. But these faults, which became grievous in the eyes of his subjects, commended him to the hearts of his courtiers, the common purpose of whose lives was pursuit of pleasure. Never

was sovereign more gracious to those who came in contact with him, or less ceremonious with his friends ; whilst abroad he had lived with his little band of courtiers more as a companion than a king. The bond of exile had drawn them close together ; an equal fortune had gone far towards obliterating distinctions of royalty ; and custom had so fitted the monarch and his friends to familiarity, that on his return to England neither he nor they laid aside a mutual freedom of treatment which by degrees extended itself throughout the court. For all that 'he was master,' as Welwood says, 'of something in his person and aspect that commanded both love and admiration at once.'

Among his many gifts was that of telling a story well—a rare one 'tis true in all ages. Never was he better pleased than when, surrounded by a group of gossips, he narrated some anecdote of which he was the hero ; and, though his tales were more than twice told, they were far from tedious ; inasmuch as, being set forth with brighter flashes of wit and keener touches of irony, they were ever pleasant to hear. His conversation was of a like complexion to his tales, pointed,

shrewd, and humorous ; frequently—as became the manner of the times — straying far afield of propriety, and taking liberties of expression of which nice judgments could not approve. But indeed his majesty's speech was not more free than his conduct was licentious. He could not think, he gravely told Bishop Burnet, 'God would make a man miserable for taking a little pleasure out of the way.' Accordingly he followed the free bent of his desires, and his whole life was soon devoted to voluptuousness: a vice which an ingenious courtier obligingly describes as a 'warmth and sweetness of the blood that would not be confined in the communicating itself—an overflowing of good nature, of which he had such a stream that it would not be restrained within the banks of a crabbed and unsociable virtue.'

The ease and freedom of his continental life had no doubt fostered this lamentable depravity ; for his misfortunes, as an exiled king, by no means prevented him following his inclinations as an ardent lover. Accordingly, his intrigues at that time were numerous, as may be judged from the fact of Lady Byron being described as 'his seventeenth mistress abroad.' The offspring

of one of his continental mistresses was destined to plunge the English nation into civil warfare, and to suffer a traitor's death on Tower Hill in the succeeding reign.

The profligacy which Charles practised abroad not being discontinued at home, he resumed in England an intrigue commenced at Brussels a short time before the restoration. The object of this amour was the beautiful Barbara Palmer, afterwards, by reason of her lack of virtue, raised to the peerage under the titles of Countess of Castlemaine, and Duchess of Cleveland. This lady, who became a most prominent figure in the court of the merry monarch, was daughter of William, second Viscount Grandison, a brave gentleman and a loyal, who had early in life fallen in the civil war whilst fighting for his king. He is described as having, among other gifts, 'a faultless person,' a boon which descended to his only child, the bewitching Barbara. In the earliest dawn of her womanhood she encountered her first lover in the person of Philip Stanhope, second Earl of Chesterfield. My lord was at this time a youthful widower, and is described as having a very agreeable face,

a fine head of hair, an indifferent shape, and a pleasant wit. He was, moreover, an elegant beau and a dissolute man—testimony of which latter fact may be gathered from a letter written to him in 1658, by his sister-in-law, Lady Essex, to prevent the ‘ruin of his soule.’ Writes her ladyship: ‘You treate all the mad drinking lords, you sweare, you game, and commit all the extravagances that are insident to untamed youths, to such a degree that you make yourselfe the talke of all places, and the wonder of those who thought otherwise of you, and of all sober people.’

When Barbara was sixteen, my lord, then in his twenty-third year, inherited the title and estates of his grandfather: he therefore became master of his own fortune and could bestow his hand where he pleased. That he was in love with Barbara is, indeed, most true; but that his passion was dishonourable is likewise certain: for though he wrote her letters full of tenderness, and kept assignations with her at Butler’s shop on Ludgate Hill, he was the while negotiating a marriage with one Mrs. Fairfax, to whom he was not, however, united. His intrigue with Barbara

continued for upwards of three years, when it was temporarily suspended by her marriage to one Roger Palmer, a student of the Inner Temple, the son of a Middlesex knight, and, moreover, a man of the most obliging temper, as will hereafter be seen. Barbara's loyalty to her husband was but of short duration. Before she had been nine months a wife, we find her writing to her old lover that she is 'ready and willing to goe all over the world' with him—a sacrifice which he declined to accept, though eager to take advantage of the affection which prompted it. A little while later he was obliged to quit England; for it happened in the first month of the year 1660 he quarrelled with and killed one Francis Woolley, a student at law, to avoid the consequences of which act he speedily fled the country.

Arriving at Calais, he wrote to King Charles, who was then preparing to return, throwing himself on his mercy, and beseeching his pardon; which the king granting, Lord Chesterfield sought his majesty at Brussels. Soon afterwards Barbara Palmer and her complaisant husband, a right loyal man, joined the king's court abroad,

when the intrigue commenced which was continued on the very night of the monarch's arrival in London. It is true the loyal *Parliamentary Intelligencer* stated 'his majesty was diverted from his pious intention of going to Westminster to offer up his devotions of prayer and praise in publick according to the appointment of his Majesty, and made his oblations unto God in the presence-chamber;' but it is, alas, equally certain, according to Oldmixon, Lord Dartmouth, and other reliable authorities, he spent the first night of his return in the company of Barbara Palmer. From that time this abandoned woman exercised an influence over the king which wholly disgraced his court, and almost ruined his kingdom.

Another prominent figure, whose history is inseparable from the king's, was that of his majesty's brother, James, Duke of York—a man of greater ambition and lesser talents than the merry monarch, but one whose amorous disposition equalled the monarch's withal. At an early period of his life the Duke of York was witness of the strife which divided his unhappy father's kingdom. When only eight years old he was sent for by

Charles I. to York, but was forbidden by the Parliament to leave St. James's Palace. Despite its commands he was, however, carried to the king by the gallant Marquis of Hertford. That same year the boy witnessed the refusal of Sir John Hotham, Governor of Hull, to admit his majesty within the gates; and James was subsequently present at the siege of Bristol, and the famous battle of Edgehill, when his life at one period of the engagement was in imminent peril.

Until 1646 he continued under the guardianship of his father, when, on the entrance of Fairfax into Oxford, the young duke was found among the prisoners, and by Cromwell's orders committed to the charge of Sir George Ratcliffe. A few months later he was removed to St. James's Palace, when in company with his brother, the Duke of Gloucester, and his sister, the Princess Elizabeth, he was placed under the care of Lord Northumberland, who had joined the Republican cause.

Though by no means treated with unkindness, the young duke, unhappy at the surveillance placed upon his actions, and fearful of the

troubles quickly gathering over the kingdom, twice sought escape. This was a serious offence in the eyes of Cromwell's Parliament ; a committee was accordingly sent to examine him, and he was threatened with imprisonment in the Tower. Though only in his fourteenth year he already possessed both determination and courage, by reason of which he resolved to risk all danger, and make a third effort for freedom. Accordingly he laid his plans with much ingenuity, selecting two men from those around him to aid his undertaking. These were George Howard and Colonel Bamfield. The latter had once served in the king's army, but when the fortunes of war had gone against his royal master, had professed himself friendly to the Republicans. No doubt the young duke saw the gallant colonel was still true at heart to the Royalist cause, and therefore trusted him at this critical juncture.

Now for a fortnight previous to the night on which he designed to escape, James made it his habit to play at hide-and-seek every evening after supper with his brother and sister, and the children of the officers then located in the palace ; and in such secure places did he secrete

himself that his companions frequently searched for over half an hour without discovering him. This of course accustomed the household to miss him, and was cunningly practised for the purpose of gaining time on his pursuers when he came to be sought for in good earnest.

At last the eventful night fixed for his escape arrived; and after supper a pleasant group of merry children prepared to divert themselves in the long dark halls and narrow winding passages of the grim old palace. James, as usual, proposed concealing himself, and leaving his companions for the purpose, disappeared behind some arras; but, instead of hiding, he hastened to his sister's chamber, where he locked up a favourite dog that was in the habit of following his footsteps wherever he went, and then noiselessly slipped down a back stairs which led to an inner garden. Having taken care to provide himself with a key fitting the garden door, he quickly slipped into the park. Here he found Colonel Bamfield waiting, who, giving him a cloak and a wig for his better disguise, hurried him into a hackney coach, which drove them as far as Salisbury House in the Strand. From thence they went

through Spring Garden, and down Ivy Lane, when, taking boat, they landed close by London Bridge. Here entering the house of a surgeon friendly to their adventure, they found a woman named Murray awaiting them, who immediately provided a suit of woman's wearing apparel for the young duke, in which she helped to attire him. Dressed in this costume he, attended by the faithful Bamfield, hastened to Lion Quay, where they entered a barge hired for their conveyance to a Dutch frigate stationed beyond Gravesend.

Meanwhile, the children not being able to discover their playfellow in the palace, their elders became suspicious of the duke's escape, and began to aid the search. Before an hour elapsed they were convinced he had fled, and St. James's was thrown into a state of the utmost excitement and confusion. Notice of his flight was at once despatched to General Fairfax at Whitehall, who immediately gave orders to have all the roads from London guarded, especially those leading to the north; for it was surmised he would in the first instance seek to escape into Wales. The duke, however, had taken a safer course, but one which was not

unattended by danger. He had not sailed far in the barge when its master became suspicious that he was aiding the escape of some persons of consequence, and became frightened lest he should get into trouble by rendering them his services. And presently his surmise was converted into certainty; for looking through a cranny of the barge-room door, he saw the young woman fling her leg on the table and pull up her stocking in a most unmaidenly manner. He therefore at once peremptorily declared to Colonel Bamfield they must land at Gravesend, and procure another boat to carry them to the ship; for it would be impossible for the barge to pass the block-house lower down without being observed, and consequently inspected, as was the custom at this troubled time. On hearing which Colonel Bamfield was filled with dismay; but, knowing that at heart the people were loyal towards the Stuarts, he confided the identity of his passenger, and begged him not to betray them in this hour of peril. To give his appeal further weight, he promised the fellow a considerable sum if they safely reached the frigate; for human nature is weak, and greed of gold is strong. On

this, the bargee, who was a loyal man, promised he would help them to the best of his power; the lights were therefore extinguished, the oars drawn in, and, the tide fortunately answering, the barge glided noiselessly down under cover of night, and passed the block-house unobserved. In good time they reached the frigate, which, the duke and Colonel Bamfield boarding, at once set sail, and in a few days landed them at Middleburgh. James proceeded to the court of his sister, the Princess of Orange, and later on joined his mother in France.

At the age of twenty he served in the French army, under Turenne, against the Spanish forces in Flanders, and subsequently in several campaigns, where he invariably showed himself so brave and valiant that the Prince de Conde declared if ever there was a man without fear, it was James, Duke of York. Now it happened that in 1658 the Princess of Orange went to Paris in order to visit the queen mother, as the widow of Charles I. was called. The Duke of York was in the gay capital at this time, and it soon became noticed that he fixed his attention overmuch on one of his sister's maids of honour,

Anne Hyde. This gentlewoman, then in her twenty-first year, was the possessor of a comely countenance, excellent shape, and much wit. Anne was daughter of Edward Hyde, a worthy man, who had been bred to the law, and proved himself so faithful a servant to Charles I., that his majesty had made him Privy Councillor and Chancellor of the Exchequer. After the king's execution, in 1649, the chancellor thought it wise for himself and his family to seek refuge in exile, and accordingly joined Charles II., with whom he lived in the closest friendship, and for whose return he subsequently negotiated with General Monk.

Now James, after his fashion, made love to Mistress Hyde, who encouraged his advances until they reached a certain stage, beyond which the judicious maiden forbade them to proceed unless blessed by the sanction of holy church. The duke, impatient to secure his happiness, was therefore secretly united to Mistress Hyde in the bonds of matrimony on the 24th of November, in the year of grace 1659, at Breda, to which place the Princess of Orange had returned. In

a little while, the restoration being effected, the duke returned to England with the king, leaving his bride behind. And Chancellor Hyde being presently re-established in his offices, and settled in his residence at Worcester House in the Strand, sent for his wife and children; the more speedily as he had received an overture from a noble family, on behalf of 'a hopeful, well-bred young gentleman,' who expressed himself anxious to wed with Mistress Anne.

The same young lady had not long returned, when she informed her husband she was about to become a mother; whereon the duke, seeking the king, fell upon his knees before him, laid bare his secret, and besought him to sanction his union, 'that he might publicly marry in such a manner as his majesty thought necessary for the consequence thereof;' adding that, if consent were refused, he would 'immediately take leave of the kingdom and spend his life in foreign parts.' King Charles was astonished and perplexed by this confession. James was heir, and as such it behoved him to wed with one suited, by reason of her lineage, to support the dignity of the crown, and calculated by her relation

towards foreign powers to strengthen the influence of the throne. The duke was fully aware of this, and, moreover, knew he could without much difficulty have his marriage annulled ; but that he did not adopt this course was an honourable trait in his character ; and, indeed, his conduct and that of the king was most creditable throughout the transactions which followed ; an account of which is set forth with great minuteness in the ‘ Continuation of Edward Hyde, Lord Clarendon’s Life.’

Without the advice of his council, the king could give no satisfactory reply to his brother. He therefore summoned two of his trusty friends, the Marquis of Ormond and the Earl of Southampton, whom he informed of the duke’s marriage, requesting them to communicate the same to the chancellor, and return with him for private consultation. The good man’s surprise at this news concerning his daughter was, according to his own account, exceeding great, and was only equalled by his vast indignation. His loyalty towards the royal family was so fervent that it overlooked his affection to his child. He therefore fell into a violent

passion, protested against her wicked presumption, and advised that the king 'should immediately cause the woman to be sent to the Tower, and to be cast into a dungeon, under so strict a guard that no person should be admitted to come to her; and then that an act of parliament should be immediately passed for the cutting off her head, to which he would not only give his consent, but would very willingly be the first man that should propose it.' All this he presently repeated to the king, and moreover, assured him an example of the highest severity, in a case so nearly concerning himself, would serve as a warning that others might take heed of offences committed against his regal dignity.

News of this marriage spread throughout the court with rapidity, and caused the utmost excitement; which in a little while was somewhat abated by the announcement that the king's youngest brother Henry, Duke of Gloucester, was taken ill of small-pox. This young prince, who is described as 'a pretty boy,' possessed parts which bade fair to surpass his brothers. He was indeed associated by his family with their tenderest memories, inasmuch as he

had been with his father on the sad day previous to his execution. On that melancholy occasion, Charles I. had taken him upon his knee, and said to him very tenderly, 'Sweet-heart, they will cut off thy father's head,' at which the boy shuddered and turned pale. 'Mark, child, what I say,' continued the unhappy king, 'they will cut off my head, and, perhaps, make thee a king; but mark what I say, you must not be made king as long as your brothers Charles and James are alive, for they will cut off thy brothers' heads when they catch them, and cut off thy head at last; and therefore I charge you not to be made a king by them.' To which the lad replied very earnestly, 'I will be torn in pieces first.' Sometime after the death of his father he was allowed to join his family in France, and, like his brother James, entered the army of that country. On the restoration, he had returned with the king, and, three months later, this 'prince of very extraordinary hopes' died, grievously lamented by the court, and especially by his majesty, who declared he felt this loss more than any other which had previously fallen upon him.

Scarcely had he been laid to rest in the vault containing the dust of Mary Queen of Scots and Lady Arabella Stuart, when the Princess of Orange arrived in England to pay the king a visit of ceremony. No sooner was she settled at court, than rumour of her brother's marriage reached her; on which she became outrageous; but her wrath was far exceeded by that of the queen mother, who, on hearing the news, wrote to the duke expressing her indignation 'that he should have such low thoughts as to marry such a woman.' The epistle containing this sentence was at once shown by James to his wife, whom he continually saw and spent much time with, unknown to her father, who had given orders she should keep her chamber. Parliament now sat, but no mention was made of the duke's marriage by either House; and, inasmuch as the union so nearly concerned the nation, this silence caused considerable surprise. It was surmised the delay was made in deference to the feelings of the queen mother, who at this juncture set out for England, to prevent what she was pleased to term 'so great a stain and dishonour to the

crown.' The king regarded his brother's alliance in a lenient spirit, and not only spoke of it frequently before the court, but expressed his desire of bringing the indiscretion to a happy conclusion by a public acknowledgment.

The queen mother, being an ambitious woman, had cherished certain schemes for extending the power of her family by the respective marriages of her sons, which the duke's union was, of course, calculated to curtail. She therefore regarded his wife with the bitterest disdain. Whenever that woman should be brought into Whitehall by one door, her majesty declared she would leave it by another and never enter it again. The marriage was rendered all the more disagreeable to the queen, because the object of her son's choice was daughter of the lord chancellor, whose influence over Charles II. had frequently opposed her plans in the past, and threatened to prevent their realization in the future. The monarch, however, paid little attention to his mother's indignation. He was resolved no disgrace which he could hinder should fall upon the family of one who had served him with disinterested loyalty ; and, by way of

proving his friendship towards the chancellor on the present occasion, he, before setting out to meet his mother on her arrival at Dover, presented him with twenty thousand pounds, and left a signed warrant for creating him a baron, which he desired the attorney-general to have ready to pass the seals at his return.

In the meantime a wicked plot, for the purpose of lessening James's affection for his wife, and ultimately preventing the acknowledgment of his marriage, was promoted by the chancellor's enemies and the duke's friends, principal amongst whom were the Princess of Orange and Sir Charles Berkley, 'a fellow of great wickedness.' Sir Charles was his royal highness's most trusted friend, and was, moreover, devoted to the service of the princess and her mother. He therefore determined to hinder the duke from taking a step which he was of opinion would injure him irretrievably. Accordingly, when James spoke in confidence concerning his marriage, Sir Charles told him it was wholly invalid, inasmuch as it had taken place without the king's consent; and that a union with the daughter of an insignificant lawyer was not to be thought of by the

heir to the crown. Moreover, he hinted he could a tale unfold regarding her behaviour. At this the duke became all impatient to hear what his good friend had to say ; whereon that valiant gentleman boasted, with an air of great bravery and truth, of certain gallantries which had passed between him and the lady. On hearing this, James, being credulous, was sorely depressed. He ceased to visit his wife, withdrew from general company ; and so well did Sir Charles's scheme succeed, that before the queen's arrival, the duke had decided on denying his marriage with one who had wrought him dishonour. The king, however, put no faith in these aspersions ; he felt sure 'there was a wicked conspiracy set on foot by villains.'

It therefore happened the queen was spared the trouble she had anticipated with her son ; indeed, he humbly begged her pardon for 'having placed his affections so unequally, of which he was sure there was now an end'—a confession most gratifying to her majesty. The duke's bitter depression continued, and was soon increased by the death of his sister, the Princess of Orange, which was occasioned by small-pox on

the 23rd of December, 1660. In her last agonies, Lord Clarendon says 'she expressed a dislike of the proceedings in that affair, to which she had contributed too much.' This fact, together with his royal highness's unhappiness, had due weight on Sir Charles Berkley, who began to repent of the calumnies he had spoken. Accordingly, the 'lewd informer' went to the duke, and sought to repair the evil he had wrought. Believing, he said, that such a marriage would be the absolute ruin of his royal highness, he had made the accusation which he now confessed to be false, and without the least ground ; for he was very confident of the lady's honour and virtue. He then begged pardon on his knees for a fault committed out of pure devotion, and trusted the duke would 'not suffer him to be ruined by the power of those whom he had so unworthily provoked, and of which he had so much shame that he had not confidence to look upon them.'

James was so much relieved by what he heard that he not only forgave Sir Charles, but embraced him, and promised him protection. Nor did his royal highness longer withhold the

reparation due to his wife, who, with the approval of the king and the reluctant consent of the queen, was received at court as Duchess of York. Such was the romance connected with the marriage of her who became mother of two English queens — Mary, wife of William of Orange, and Anne, of pious memory.

CHAPTER V.

Morality of the Restoration.—Puritan piety.—Cromwell's intrigues.—Conduct of women under the Republic.—Some notable courtiers.—The Duke of Ormond and his family.—Lord St. Albans and Henry Jermyn.—His Grace of Buckingham and Mistress Fairfax.—Lord Rochester.—Beautiful Barbara Palmer.—The King's projected marriage.—Catherine of Braganza.—His Majesty's speech.—A Royal love-letter.—The new Queen sets sail.

A GENERAL idea obtains that the libertine example set forth by Charles II. and his courtiers is wholly to blame for the spirit of depravity which marked his reign. That it was in part answerable for the spread of immorality is true, inasmuch as the royalists considered sufficient aversion could not be shown to the loathsome hypocrisy of the puritans, and therefore fell into an opposite extreme of ostentatious profligacy. But that the court was entirely responsible for

the vice which tainted all classes of society whilst the merry monarch occupied the throne, is false.

Other causes had long been tending to produce this unhappy effect. The reign of the Commonwealth had not been remarkable for its virtue, though it had been notable for its pharisaism. With the puritan, words of piety took the place of deeds of grace; the basest passions were often hidden under sanctimonious exteriors. Even Cromwell, 'a man of long and dark discourses, sermons, and prayers,' was an adulterer. Bishop Burnet, who has no harsh words for him, and few gentle ones for Charles, tells us the Protector's intrigue with Lady Dysart was 'not a little taken notice of;' on which, the shrewd and godly man 'broke it off.' He therefore, as Heath records, began an amour with a lady of lesser note—Mrs. Lambert, the wife of a puritan, herself a lady devoted to psalm singing, and audible prayer when not otherwise pleasantly engaged. The Protector's family, in the person of his eldest daughter Bridget, likewise furnishes an example of the frailty to which the holiest puritans were subject. This lady, the wife of

Ireton, was described as 'a personage of sublime growth.' According to George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, she became enamoured to an unholy degree of his fine shape whilst he, on his escape from Worcester, was performing in the streets, disguised as a mountebank. Sending for him, therefore, to her house, she made advances which that gallant, not being attracted by her person, felt disinclined to accept; and, by way of excusing himself, declared he was unable to give her that proof of his devotion she desired, inasmuch as he was a Jew, and therefore forbidden by his faith to benefit or befriend a Christian woman, though she was a puritan saint.

The general character of many of the news-sheets of the day proves that morality under the Republic was at a low ebb. Anarchy in a kingdom invariably favours dissoluteness in a people, inasmuch as the disturbance of civil order tends to unsettle moral law. Homes being divided amongst themselves by political strife, paternal care was suspended, and filial respect ignored. In the general confusion which obtained, the distinction of social codes was overlooked. Lord Clarendon states that, during this unhappy

period, young people of either sex were 'educated in all the liberty of vice, without reprehension or restraint.' He adds, 'The young women conversed without any circumspection or modesty, and frequently met at taverns and common eating-houses.' An additional description of the ways and manners of young maidens under the Republic is given in a rare and curious pamphlet, entitled 'A Character of England as it was lately presented in a Letter to a Nobleman of France'; printed in the year 1659, for Jo. Croke, and sold at the Ship in St. Paul's Yard. Having spoken of taverns where 'fury and intemperance' reign, and where, 'that nothing may be wanting to the height of luxury and impiety, organs have been translated out of the churches for the purpose of chanting their dithyrambics and bestiall bacchanalias to the tune of those instruments which were wont to assist them in the celebration of God's praises,' the writer continues: 'Your lordship will scarce believe me that the ladies of greatest quality suffer themselves to be treated in one of those taverns, where a curtezan in other cities would scarcely vouchsafe to be entertained; but you will be more

astonish't when I shall assure you that they drink their crowned cups roundly, strain healths through their smocks, daunce after the fiddle, kiss freely, and tearm it an honourable treat.' He furthermore says they were to be found until midnight in company with their lovers at Spring Garden, which seemed to be 'contrived to all the advantages of gallantry.' From which evidences it may be gathered, that London under the Commonwealth was little less vicious than under the merry monarch.

The court which Charles speedily gathered round him on his restoration was the most brilliant the nation had ever witnessed. Those of birth and distinction, who had sought refuge abroad during the late troubles, now joyfully returned: whilst the juvenile branches of noble families living in retirement in England, to whom royalty had been a stranger, no less eagerly flocked to the presence of the gay young king. The wit and politeness of the men, the grace and beauty of the women, who surrounded Charles II. have become proverbial; whilst the gallantries of the one, and the frailties of the other, savour more of romance than reality.

That the condition of the court on its establishment may be realized, it is necessary, at this stage of its history, to introduce briefly some of the chief personages who surrounded his majesty, and occupied prominent attention in the annals of his reign. Notably amongst them were the gallant Duke of Ormond and his family. His grace, now in his fiftieth year, was distinguished for his commanding appearance, gracious manner, and excellent wit. During the troubles of the civil war, he had proved himself a most loyal subject, inasmuch as he had vested his fortune and ventured his person in service of the late king. Subsequently refusing liberal offers made him by Cromwell, on condition of living in peaceful retirement, he, after the execution of Charles I., betook himself to France, and shared exile with the young king until the restoration. In consequence of his proven fealty, honours were then deservingly showered upon him: he was made grand steward of the household, first lord of the bedchamber, and subsequently lord lieutenant of Ireland. The duchess, who had participated in her husband's misfortunes with a courage equal to his own, was

a high-minded and most virtuous lady, who had brought up her family with great care. Scarcely less distinguished in mien and manner than the duke, were his two sons, Thomas, Earl of Ossory, and Lord Richard Butler, afterwards Earl of Arran. My lord of Ossory was no less remarkable for his beauty than famous for his accomplishments: he rode and played tennis to perfection, performed upon the lute to entrancement, and danced to the admiration of the court ; he was, moreover, a good historian, and well versed in chronicles of romance. No less was the Earl of Arran proficient in all the qualifications which befitted his birth, and gifted with all the attributes which aided his gallantry.

A third member of this noble family played a more remarkable part in the history of the court during her brief career than either of her brothers. This was the Lady Elizabeth Butler, eldest daughter of the duke, who, unfortunately for her own happiness, was married to my Lord Chesterfield at the Hague, when, a few months before the restoration, that nobleman had fled to the continent in order to escape the consequences of Francis Woolley's murder. In

Lely's picture of the young Countess of Chesterfield, her piquancy attracts at a glance, whilst her beauty charms on examination. Her cousin, Anthony Hamilton, describes her as having large blue eyes, very tempting and alluring, a complexion extremely fair, and a heart 'ever open to tender sentiments,' by reason of which her troubles arose, as shall be set down in proper sequence.

Henry Jermyn, Earl of St. Albans, and his nephew 'the little Jermyn,' were also notable as figuring in court intrigues. The earl was member of the privy council to his majesty, and moreover held a still closer connection to the queen mother; for, according to Sir John Reresby, Madame Buviere, and others, her majesty had privately married his lordship abroad—an act of condescension he repaid with inhumanity. Madame Buviere says he never gave the queen a good word; and when she spoke to him he used to say, 'Que me veut cette femme?' The same authority adds, he treated her majesty in an extremely ill manner, 'so that whilst she had not a faggot to warm herself, he had in his apartments a good fire and a sumptu-

ous table.* Pepys records that the marriage of her majesty to the earl was commonly talked of at the restoration; and he likewise mentions it was rumoured 'that they had a daughter between them in France. How true,' says this gossip, 'God knows.'

The earl's nephew, Henry Jermyn, is described as having a big head and little legs, an affected carriage, and a wit consisting 'in expressions learned by rote, which he occasionally employed either in raillery or love.' For all that, he being a man of amorous disposition, the

* This testimony concerning the queen's poverty is borne out by Cardinal de Retz. In his interesting *Memoirs* he tells of a visit he paid the queen mother, then an exile in Paris. He found her with her youngest daughter, Henrietta, in the chamber of the latter. 'At my coming in,' says the Cardinal, 'she (the queen) said, "You see, I am come to keep Henrietta company; the poor child could not rise to-day for want of a fire." The truth is, that the Cardinal (Mazarin) for six months together had not ordered her any money towards her pension; that no tradespeople would trust her for anything; and there was not at her lodgings a single billet. You will do me the justice to think that the princess of England did not keep her bed the next day for want of a faggot. . . . Posterity will hardly believe that a princess of England, grand-daughter to Henry the Great, hath wanted a faggot in the month of January, in the Louvre, and in the eyes of the French court.'

number of his intrigues was no less remarkable than the rank of those who shared them. Most notable amongst his conquests was the king's eldest sister, widow of the Prince of Orange—a lady possessing in no small degree natural affections for which her illustrious family were notorious. During the exile of Charles II., Henry Jermyn had made a considerable figure at her court in Holland by reason of the splendour of his equipage, entirely supported by his uncle's wealth ; he had likewise made a forcible impression on her heart by virtue of the ardour of his addresses, wholly sustained by his own effrontery. The effect of his presence on the princess soon became visible to the court. Rumour whispered that as Lord St. Albans had already made an alliance with royalty, his nephew had likewise followed his example ; but scandal declared that young Jermyn and the princess had omitted the ceremony which should have sanctioned their happiness. The reputation of such an amour gained him the immediate attention of many women, whose interest in his character increased with the knowledge of his abilities, and helped to associate him in their memories with tenderest emotions.

Another figure prominent in this gay and goodly assembly was George Villiers, second Duke of Buckingham. The faultless beauty of his face, and graceful symmetry of his figure, would have rendered him distinguished in a court less sensuously impressionable to physical perfection, even if his talents had not dazzled, and his wit amused. On the death of the first Duke of Buckingham, 'styled the handsomest bodied man in England,' the late king of pious memory undertook the charge of the young duke, and had him educated with his own sons. Subsequently he was sent to Cambridge, and then travelled into France, the better to acquire that polish of manner and grace of bearing for which he became distinguished. But, whilst abroad, word was brought him of the distress of his master, the king; on which the young duke hastened back into England, became a cavalier, and fought his majesty's battles with great gallantry. Soon after Charles I. had been beheaded, his faithful servitor went abroad; but being loyal to the Stuart cause, he journeyed with Charles II. to Scotland, and afterwards fought beside him in the bloody battle of

Worcester. Whilst the monarch was hiding in Boscobel Wood, the duke betook himself to London, where, donning a wizard's mask, a jack-pudding coat, a hat adorned with a fox's tail and cock's feathers, he masqueraded as a mountebank, and discoursed diverting nonsense from a stage erected at Charing Cross. After running several risks, he escaped to France. But alas for the duke who was born—as Madame Dunois avows, doubtless from experience—‘for gallantry and magnificence,’ he was now penniless, his great estates being confiscated by Cromwell. However, conceiving a scheme that might secure him part of his fortune, he hastened to put it into execution.

It happened that my Lord Fairfax, one of Cromwell's great generals, had allotted to him by the Protector a portion of the Buckingham estates that returned five thousand pounds a year. The general was, moreover, placed in possession of York House, which had likewise belonged to his grace.

Now it happened Lord Fairfax, a generous-tempered man and a brave, had an only child, a daughter destined to become his heiress ; aware

of which the duke resolved to marry her, that he might in this manner recover a portion of his estate. The fact of the lady never having seen him did not in the least interfere with his plans ; that she would reject his suit seemed an impossibility ; that she would succumb to the fascination he invariably exercised over woman was a certainty. Nor did it matter that Mistress Fairfax was no beauty ; for the duke, being grateful for past favours liberally bestowed upon him by the opposite sex, had no intention of becoming under any circumstances so churlish as to limit his devotion to one lady, though she were his wife.

Carefully disguising himself, he journeyed to London, where he was met by a faithful friend, who promised he would aid him in winning Mistress Fairfax, towards which end he promptly introduced the duke to that estimable gentlewoman. Having once obtained speech of her, the remainder of his scheme was comparatively easy of accomplishment. She loved the gay and graceful gallant at first sight, and through years of bitter wrong and cruel neglect continued his faithful and devoted slave.

Though she had become clandestinely ac-

quainted with him, she was too good a daughter to wed without her father's consent. But this she had not much difficulty in obtaining. Though Lord Fairfax had fought against his king, he was not sufficiently republican to scorn alliance with nobility, nor so thoroughly puritan as to disdain connection with the ungodly. Accordingly he gave his sanction to the union, which was celebrated at his mansion at Nun Appleton, within six miles of York. Now, my Lord Fairfax had not consulted Cromwell's goodwill concerning this alliance, the news of which reaching the Protector in due time, made him exceedingly wroth. For he had daughters to marry, and, that he might strengthen his power, was desirous of wedding them to scions of nobility; Buckingham being one of those whom he had mentally selected to become a member of his family. His anger was therefore at once directed against Fairfax and his grace. The former he could not molest, but the latter he committed to the Tower; and if the great Protector had not been soon after seized by fatal illness, the duke would have made his last journey from thence to Tower Hill. As it

fell out he remained a prisoner until within a year of the coming of Charles, whom he welcomed with exceeding joy. Being bred with the merry monarch, he had from boyhood been a favourite of his majesty, with whom he shared a common love for diversion. He was, therefore, from the first a prominent figure at Whitehall ; his handsome person and extravagant dress adorned the court ; his brilliant wit and poignant satire amused the royal circle.

His grace, however, had a rival, the vivacity of whose temper and piquancy of whose humour went far to eclipse Buckingham's talent in these directions. This was the young Earl of Rochester, son of my Lord Wilmot, who had so successfully aided the king's escape after the battle of Worcester, for which service he had been created Earl of Rochester by Charles in Paris. That worthy man dying just a year previous to the restoration, his son succeeded to his titles, and likewise to an estate which had been preserved for him by the prudence of his mother. Even in his young days Lord Rochester gave evidence of possessing a lively wit and remarkable genius, which were cultivated

by his studies at Oxford and his travels abroad. So that at the age of eighteen, when he returned to England and presented himself at Whitehall, his sprightly parts won him the admiration of courtiers and secured him the favour of royalty. Nor was the young earl less distinguished by his wit and learning than by his face and figure ; the delicate beauty of his features and natural grace of his person won him the love of many women, whom the tenderness of his heart and generosity of his youth did not permit him to leave unrequited.

Soon surfeited by his conquests in the drawing-room, he was anxious to extend his triumphs in another direction ; and, selecting the sea as a scene of action, he volunteered to sail under my Lord Sandwich in quest of the Dutch East Indian fleet. At the engagements to which this led he exhibited a dauntless courage that earned him renown abroad, and covered him with honour on his return to court. From that time he, for many years, surrendered himself to a career of dissipation, often abandoning the paths of decency and decorum, pursuing vice in its most daring and eccentric fashion, employing his

genius in the composition of lampoons which spared not even the king, and in the writing of ribald verses, the very names of which are not proper to indite. Lord Orford speaks of him as a man 'whom the muses were fnd to inspire, and ashamed to avow ; and who practised, without the least reserve, that secret which can **make** verses more read for their defects than for their merits.' More of my Lord Rochester and his poems anon.

Thomas Killigrew, another courtier, was a poet, dramatist, and man of excellent wit. He had been page in the service of his late majesty, and had shared exile with the present monarch, to whose pleasures abroad and at home he was ever ready to pander. At the restoration he was appointed a groom of the bedchamber, and, moreover, was made master of the revels—an office eminently suited to his tastes, and well fitted to exercise his capacities. His ready wit amused the king so much, that he was occasionally led to freedoms of speech which taxed his majesty's good-nature. His escapades diverted the court to such an extent, that he frequently took the liberty of affording it enter-

tainment at the expense of its reputation. The 'beau Sidney,' a man 'of sweet and caressing temper,' handsome appearance, and amorous disposition; Sir George Etherege, a wit and a playwright; and Charles Sackville, Earl of Dorset, a poet and man of sprightly speech, were likewise courtiers of note.

Among such congenial companions the merry monarch abandoned himself wholly to the pursuit of pleasure, and openly carried on his intrigue with Barbara Palmer. According to the testimony of her contemporaries, she was a woman of surpassing loveliness and violent passions. Gilbert Burnet, whilst admitting her beauty, proclaims her defects. She was, he relates, 'most enormously vicious and ravenous, foolish but imperious, very uneasy to the king, and always carrying on intrigues with other men, while she yet pretended she was jealous of him.' Pepys testifies likewise to her physical attractions so long as she reigned paramount in the king's affections; but when another woman, no less fair, came betwixt my lady and his majesty's favour, Mr. Pepys, being a loyal man and a frail, found greater beauty in the new love,

whose charms he avowed surpassed the old. To his most interesting diary posterity is indebted for glimpses of the manner in which the merry monarch and his mistress behaved themselves during the first months of the restoration. Now he tells of 'great doings of musique,' which were going on at Madame Palmer's house, situated in the Strand, next Earl Sandwiche's, and of the king and the duke being with that lady: again, in the Chapel Royal, Whitehall, he observed, whilst Dr. Herbert Croft prayed and preached, 'how the Duke of York and Mrs. Palmer did talk to one another very wantonly through the hangings that part the king's closet, and the closet where the ladies sit.' And, later on, when he witnessed 'The Humorous Lieutenant' performed before the court, he noted the royal favourite was likewise present, 'with whom the king do discover a great deal of familiarity.'

Presently, in February, 1661, exactly nine months after his majesty's return, Mrs. Palmer gave birth to a daughter. To the vast amusement of the court, no less than three men claimed the privilege of being considered father of this

infant. One of these was my Lord Chesterfield, whom the child grew to resemble in face and person; the second was Roger Palmer, who left her his estate; the third was King Charles, who had her baptized Anne Palmer Fitzroy, adopted her as his daughter, and eventually married her to the Earl of Sussex.

Soon after the restoration the subject of his majesty's marriage was mooted by his councillors, who trusted a happy union would redeem him from vice, and, by bringing him heirs, help to establish him more firmly in the affections of his people. The king lending a willing ear to this advice, the sole difficulty in carrying it into execution rested in the selection of a bride congenial to his taste and equal to his sovereignty. King Louis of France had no sisters, and his nieces had not commended themselves to the merry monarch's favour during his stay abroad. Spain had two infantas, but one was wedded to the King of France, and the other betrothed to the heir of the royal house of Austria. Germany, of course, had princesses in vast numbers who awaited disposal; but when they were proposed to King Charles, 'he put off the discourse with

raillery,' as Lord Halifax narrates. 'Odd's fish,' he would say, shrugging his shoulders and making a grimace, 'I could not marry one of them: they are all dull and foggy!'

Catherine of Braganza, daughter of Don Juan IV. of Portugal, was unwedded, and to her Charles ultimately addressed himself. Alliance with her commended itself to the nation from the fact that the late king, before the troubled times began, had entered into a negotiation with Portugal concerning the marriage of this same infanta and his present majesty; and such was the esteem in which the memory of Charles I. was now held, that compliance with his desires was regarded as a sacred obligation. The Portuguese ambassador assured the merry monarch that the princess, by reason of her beauty, person, and age, was most suited to him. To convince him of this, he showed his majesty a portrait of the lady, which the king examining, declared 'that person could not be unhandsome.' The ambassador, who was of a certainty most anxious for this union, then said it was true the princess was a catholic, and would never change her faith; but she was free from 'meddling activity;' that she

had been reared by a wise mother, and would only look to the freedom of practising her own religion without interfering with that of others. Finally, he added that the princess would have a dowry befitting her high station, of no less a sum than five hundred thousand pounds sterling in ready money.

Moreover, by way of addition to this already handsome portion, the Queen of Portugal was ready to assign over and annex to the English crown, the Island of Bombay, in the East Indies, and Tangier on the African coast—a place of strength and importance, which would be of great benefit and security to British commerce. Nor was this all. Portugal was likewise willing to grant England free trade in Brazil and the East Indies, a privilege heretofore denied all other countries. This was indeed a dower which none of the ‘dull and foggy’ German princesses could bring the crown. The prospect of obtaining so much ready money especially commended the alliance to the extravagant taste of his majesty, who had this year complained to Parliament of his poverty, by reason of which he ‘was so much grieved to see

many of his friends come to him at Whitehall, and to think they were obliged to go somewhere else for a dinner.'

The merry monarch was therefore well pleased at the prospect of his union, as were likewise the chancellor and four or five 'competent considerers of such an affair' whom he consulted. These worthy counsellors and men of sage repute, who included in their number the Duke of Ormond and Sir Edward Nicholas, Secretary of State, the Earl of Manchester, and the Earl of Southampton, after regretting it was not agreeable to his majesty to select a queen who professed the protestant religion, gave it as their opinion there was no catholic princess in Europe whom he, with so much reason and advantage, could marry as the infanta of Portugal. They, moreover, added that the sum promised as part of her portion, setting aside the places, 'was much greater—almost double to what any king had ever received in money by 'any marriage.' The council, therefore, without a dissenting voice, advised him to the marriage.

On the 8th of May, 1661, his majesty, being clad in robes of state, and wearing the crown,

rode in great pomp to open Parliament, which he addressed from the throne. In the course of his speech, he announced his approaching marriage in a singularly characteristic address. 'I will not conclude, without telling you some news,' he said, 'news that I think will be very acceptable to you, and therefore I should think myself unkind, and ill-natured if I did not impart it to you. I have been put in mind by my friends that it was now time to marry, and I have thought so myself ever since I came into England. But there appeared difficulties enough in the choice, though many overtures have been made to me ; and if I should never marry until I could make such a choice against which there could be no foresight of any inconvenience that may ensue, you would live to see me an old bachelor, which I think you do not desire to do. I can now tell you, not only that I am resolved to marry, but with whom I am resolved to marry. If God please, it is with the daughter of Portugal. And I will make all the haste I can to fetch you a queen hither, who, I doubt not, will bring great blessings with her to me and you.'

Next day addresses of congratulation were

presented to his majesty by both Houses. This gratifying news was made known to the Portuguese ambassador, Count da Ponte, by the lord high chancellor, who visited his excellency for the purpose, attended by state befitting such a great and joyful occasion ; two gentlemen preceding him, bearing respectively a gilded mace and a crimson velvet purse embroidered with the arms of Great Britain, and many others following him to the ambassador's residence. A month later, the marriage articles were signed ; the new queen being guaranteed the free exercise of her faith, and the sum of thirty thousand a [year during life ; whilst the king was assured possession of her great dowry, together with the territories already mentioned, one of which, Bombay, ultimately became of such vast importance to the crown.

Charles then despatched the Portuguese ambassador to Catherine—from this time styled queen—in order to make arrangements for her journey into England. Likewise he wrote a letter, remarkable for the fervour of its sentiments and elegance of its diction, which da Ponte was commissioned to convey her. This

courtly epistle, addressed by Charles to ‘The Queen of Great Britain, my wife and lady, whom God preserve,’ is dated July 2nd, 1661, and runs as follows :

‘MY LADY AND WIFE,

‘Already, at my request, the good Count da Ponte has set off for Lisbon; for me the signing of the marriage act has been great happiness; and there is about to be despatched at this time after him one of my servants, charged with what would appear necessary, whereby may be declared, on my part, the inexpressible joy of this felicitous conclusion, which, when received, will hasten the coming of your majesty.

‘I am going to make a short progress into some of my provinces ; in the meantime, whilst I go from my most sovereign good, yet I do not complain as to whither I go, seeking in vain tranquillity in my restlessness ; hoping to see the beloved person of your majesty in these kingdoms already your own, and that with the same anxiety with which, after my long banishment, I desired to see myself within them, and my subjects, desiring also to behold me amongst them, having manifested their most ardent wishes

for my return, well known to the world. The presence of your serenity is only wanting to unite us, under the protection of God, in the health and content I desire. I have recommended to the queen, our lady and mother, the business of the Count da Ponte, who, I must here avow, has served me in what I regard as the greatest good in this world, which cannot be mine less than it is that of your majesty; likewise not forgetting the good Richard Russell,* who laboured on his part to the same end.

‘The very faithful husband of your majesty,
whose hand he kisses,

‘CHARLES REX.’

London, 2nd of July, 1661.

During many succeeding months preparations were made in England to receive the young queen. The ‘Royal Charles,’ a stately ship capable of carrying eighty cannon and six hundred men, was suitably fitted to convey her to England.

The state room and apartments destined for use of the future bride were furnished and

* Richard Russell was Bishop of Portalegre, in Portugal, and Almoner to Catherine of Braganza.

ornamented in most luxuriant manner, being upholstered in crimson velvet, handsomely carpeted, and hung with embroideries and taffeties. Lord Sandwich was made commander of the gallant fleet which in due time accompanied the 'Royal Charles.' He was likewise appointed ambassador extraordinary, and charged with safely conducting the bride unto her bridegroom.

In due time, my lord, in high spirits, set sail with his gallant fleet, and on arriving at Portugal was received with every mark of profound respect, and every sign of extravagant joy. Stately ceremonies at court and brilliant rejoicings in public made time speed with breathless rapidity. But at length there came a day when my Lord Sandwich encountered a difficulty he had not foreseen. According to instructions, he had taken possession of Tangier before proceeding for the queen; and he had likewise been directed to see her dowry put on board one of his ships, before receiving her on the 'Royal Charles.'

Now the Queen of Portugal, who acted as regent since the death of her husband, being

strongly desirous of seeing her daughter the consort of a great sovereign, and of protecting her country from the tyranny of Spain by an alliance with England, had gathered the infanta's marriage portion with infinite trouble; which had necessitated the selling of her majesty's jewels and much of her plate, and the borrowing of both plate and jewels from churches and monasteries all over the land. The sums accumulated in this manner she had carefully stowed away in great sacks; but, alas, between the date on which the marriage treaty had been signed, and arrival of the English ambassador to claim the bride, Spain had made war upon Portugal, and the dowry had to be expended in arming the country for defence. Therefore, when my Lord Sandwich mentioned the dowry, her majesty, with keen regrets and infinite apologies, informed him so great were the straits of poverty to which her kingdom was reduced, that she could pay only half the stipulated sum at present, but promised the remaining portion should be made up the following year. Moreover, the part which she then asked him to accept was made up of jewels, sugars, spices and other com-

modities which she promised to have converted by arrangement into solid gold in London.

The ambassador was therefore sorely perplexed, and knew not whether he should return to England without the bride, or take her and the merchandise which represented half her dowry on board his ship. He decided on the latter course, and the queen, with her court and retinue, set sail for merry England on the 23rd of April, 1662.

CHAPTER VI.

The king's intrigue with Barbara Palmer.—The queen arrives at Portsmouth.—Visited by the Duke of York.—The king leaves town.—First interview with his bride. His letter to the lord chancellor.—Royal marriage and festivities.—Arrival at Hampton Court Palace.—Prospects of a happy union.—Lady Castlemaine gives birth to a second child.—The king's infatuation.—Mistress and wife.—The queen's misery.—The king's cruelty. Lord Clarendon's messages—His majesty resolves to break the queen's spirit.—End of the domestic quarrel.

WHILST the king conducted the negotiations of his marriage with Catherine of Braganza, he likewise continued the pursuit of his intrigue with Barbara Palmer. The unhappy fascination which this vile woman exercised over his majesty increased with time ; and though his ministers declared a suitable marriage would reform his ways, his courtiers concluded he had no intention of abandoning his mistress in favour of his

wife. For Barbara Palmer, dreading the loss of her royal lover and the forfeiture of wealth accruing from this connection, had firmly bound him in her toils. Moreover, in order that he might continually abide under her influence, she conceived a scheme which would of necessity bring her into constant intercourse with him and the young queen. She therefore demanded he would appoint her one of the ladies of the bedchamber to her majesty, to which he, heedless of the insult this would fix upon his wife, readily consented.

In order to qualify Barbara Palmer for such a position, it was necessary she should be raised to the peerage. This could only be accomplished by ennobling her husband, unless public decency were wholly ignored, and she was created a peeress in her own right, whilst he remained a commoner. After some faint show of hesitation, Roger Palmer accepted the honours thrust upon him by reason of his wife's infamy. On the 11th of December, 1661, he was created Earl of Castlemaine, and Baron Limerick in the peerage of Ireland, when the royal favourite became a countess.

And now the merry month of May being arrived, the queen was speedily expected; and on the night of the 13th joyful tidings reached London that the 'Royal Charles,' accompanied by the fleet, was in sight of Portsmouth. At which news there was great rejoicing throughout the town, church bells ringing merrily, and bonfires blazing brightly; but before the Countess of Castlemaine's house, where the king, according to his custom was at supper, there was no fire, though such signs of joy burned 'at all the rest of the doors almost in the streets, which was much observed.'

Next day the fleet arrived in the harbour of Portsmouth, about four in the afternoon. Heath says the people gathered to receive the bride with all possible demonstrations of honour, 'the nobility and gentry and multitudes of Londoners, in most rich apparel and in great numbers, waiting on the shore for her landing; and the mayor and aldermen and principal persons of that corporation being in their gowns, and with a present and a speech ready to entertain her; the cannon and small shot, both from round that town and the whole fleet, echoing to one another the loud

proclamations of their joy.' These good people were, however, destined to disappointment; for though the bride was impatient to land, because suffering from prostration consequent on a rough voyage and severe illness, she was not, in observance of court etiquette, permitted to leave the ship until the king arrived. This did not take place until six days later. Charles being detained in town by reason of some important bills then passing in Parliament, which it was necessary for him to sign. He had, however, despatched his royal brother of York, then Lord High Admiral of England, to meet her at sea, and give her greeting in his name. Accordingly the duke had encountered the fleet at the Isle of Wight, and gone on board the queen's ship, when she received him in her cabin seated under a canopy on a chair of state. His royal highness expressed his joy at her arrival, presented 'his majesty's high respects and his exceeding affection for her,' and paid her many compliments. Lord Chesterfield, who had been appointed chamberlain to the queen, tells us: 'Although James, in consequence of his near connection with the sovereign, might have saluted the royal

bride, he did not avail himself of this privilege, out of a delicate regard to his majesty's feelings, that he might be the first man to offer that compliment to his queen; she coming out of a country where it was not the fashion.' The Duke of York presented some noblemen who had accompanied him; after which she introduced the members of her suite. The queen and her brother-in-law then held a conversation in the Spanish language, when James assured her of his affection, and besought her to accept his services. To these compliments she replied in like manner, when he arose to depart. The queen advanced three paces with him, notwithstanding that he protested against such courtesy, bidding her remember her rank. At this she smiled, and answered with much sweetness, 'She wished to do that out of affection, which she was not obliged to do'—a reply which made a favourable impression on his mind. Whilst she continued on board, the duke and his suite visited her daily, entering freely into conversation with her, and finding her 'a most agreeable lady.' Probably at the desire of the king, she left the ship before his arrival, and was conveyed to his

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majesty's house at Portsmouth, where she was received by the Countess of Suffolk, first lady of the bedchamber, and four other ladies who had been appointed members of her household. One of her first requests to these was—as may be learned from a letter of Lord Sandwich, preserved in the Bodleian library—‘that they would put her in that habit they thought would be most pleasing to the king.’ Before leaving the ‘Royal Charles’ she spoke to all the officers of the ship, thanked them for their services, and permitted them to kiss her hand. She then presented a collar of gold to the captain, and gave money to be distributed among the crew.

When at length the parliamentary business was concluded, the king found himself in readiness to depart. The last words he addressed to his faithful commons before starting are worth recording: ‘The mention of my wife's arrival,’ said he, in the pleasant familiar tone it was his wont to use, ‘puts me in mind to desire you to put that compliment upon her, that her entrance into this town may be made with more decency than the ways will now suffer it to be; and to that purpose I pray you would quickly pass such

laws as are before you, in order to the mending those ways, that she may not find Whitehall surrounded with water.'

At nine o'clock on the night of the 19th of May, his majesty left London in Lord Northumberland's carriage, on his way to Portsmouth. Arriving at Kingston an hour later, he entered Lord Chesterfield's coach, which awaited him there by appointment, and drove to Guildford, at which town he slept the night. In the morning he was up betimes, and posted to Portsmouth, where he arrived at noon. The queen, being ill of a slight fever, was yet in bed: but the king, all impatient to see the bride which heaven had sent him, sought admittance to her chamber. The poor princess evidently did not look to advantage; for his majesty told Colonel Legg he thought at first glance 'they had brought him a bat instead of a woman.' On further acquaintance, however, she seemed to have afforded more pleasure to the king's sight, for next day he expressed the satisfaction he felt concerning her, in a letter addressed to the lord chancellor, which is preserved in the library of the British Museum, and runs as follows :

‘PORTSMOUTH, 21st *May*
(Eight in the morning).

‘I arrived here yesterday about two in the afternoon, and, as soon as I had shifted myself, I went into my wife’s chamber, whom I found in bed, by reason of a little cough and some inclination to a fever: but I believe she will find herself very well in the morning when she wakes. I can now only give you an account of what I have seen abed, which, in short, is, her face is not so exact as to be called a beauty, though her eyes are excellent good, and not anything in her face that in the least degree can shock one: on the contrary, she hath as much agreeableness in her looks altogether as ever I saw; and if I have any skill in physiognomy, which I think I have, she must be as good a woman as ever was born. Her conversation, as much as I can perceive, is very good, for she has wit enough, and a most agreeable voice. You would wonder to see how well acquainted we are already. In a word, I think myself very happy; for I am confident our two humours will agree very well together. I have no more to say: my Lord Lieutenant will give you an account of the rest.’

The king was attended by Lord Sandwich during this interview, and his lordship, in a letter addressed to the lord chancellor, informed him the meeting between his majesty and the infanta 'hath been with much contentment on both sides, and that we are like to be very happy in their conjunction.' Next morning the Countess of Suffolk, and other ladies appointed to wait upon the bride, dressed her according to the English fashion, in 'a habit they thought would be most pleasing to the king,' in which she was married. The ceremony was first performed according to the rites of the Catholic Church, by the Rev. Lord Aubigny, brother to the Duke of Richmond, in the queen's bed-chamber; that apartment being selected for the purpose, as affording a privacy necessary to be maintained, by reason of the prejudice then existing towards Catholicism. There were present the Duke of York, Philip, afterwards Cardinal Howard, and five Portuguese, all of whom were bound over to keep the strictest secrecy concerning what they witnessed. Later in the day, Dr. Sheldon, Bishop of London, married their majesties according to the form prescribed by the

Church of England. The latter ceremony took place in the presence chamber. A rail divided the apartment, at the upper part of which the king and queen, the bishops, the Spanish Ambassador, and Sir Richard Fanshaw stood ; the lower portion being crowded by the court. When Dr. Sheldon had declared their majesties married, the Countess of Suffolk, according to a custom of the time, detached the ribbons from the bride's dress, and, cutting them in pieces, distributed them amongst those present.

Feasting, balls, and diversions of all kinds followed the celebration of the royal nuptials, and for a time the king was delighted with his bride. Four days after the marriage he writes again to the lord chancellor in most cheerful tone:

‘ My brother will tell you of all that passes here, which I hope will be to your satisfaction. I am sure ’tis so much to mine, that I cannot easily tell you how happy I think myself, and must be the worst man living (which I hope I am not) if I be not a good husband. I am confident never two humours were better fitted to-

gether than ours are. We cannot stir from hence till Tuesday, by reason that there is not carts to be had to-morrow to transport all our *garde infantas*, without which there is no stirring: so you are not to expect me till Thursday night at Hampton Court.'

They did not reach the palace until the 29th of May, that being the king's birthday, and, moreover, the anniversary of his entrance into London; a date which the queen's arrival now caused to be celebrated with triple magnificence and joy. When the coach that conveyed their majesties drew near, the whole palace seemed astir with happy excitement. Double lines of soldiers, both horse and foot, lined the way from the gates to the entrance. In the great hall the lord chancellor, foreign ambassadors, judges, and councillors of state awaited to pay homage to their majesties; whilst in various apartments were the nobility and men of quality, with their ladies, ranged according to their rank, being all eager to kiss the new queen's hand. Sure never was such show of gladness. Bells rang, people cheered, bonfires blazed.

In the evening news was brought that the Duchess of York was being rowed to Hampton from town. Hearing which the king, with a blithe heart, betook his way to meet her through the garden, now bright with spring flowers and fragrant with sweet scents, till he arrived at the gate by which the silver streak of the pleasant Thames flowed past. And presently on this calm May eve the sound of oars splashing in the tide was heard ; and anon a barge came in sight, hung with silken curtains and emblazoned with the arms of royalty. From this the Duchess of York disembarked, aided by the king. When she had offered her congratulations to him, he, taking her hand, led her to his bride, that such fair speeches might be repeated to her majesty. And coming into the queen's presence, the duchess would have gone upon her knees and kissed her majesty's hand ; but Catherine raised her in her arms, and kissed her on the cheek. Then amidst much joy the happy evening waned to night.

The royal palace of Hampton Court, in which Charles had decided on spending his honeymoon, had been raised by the magnificent Wolsey in

the plenitude of his power, as a place of recreation. Since his downfall it had been used by royalty as a summer residence, it being in truth a stately pleasure house. The great pile contained upwards of four hundred rooms. The principal apartments had cedar or gilded and frescoed ceilings, and walls hung with rare tapestries and curtains heavy with gold. Moreover, these rooms contained furniture of most skilful design and costly manufacture, and were adorned by the choice works of such masters of their art as Holbein, Bellini, Vansomer, Rubens, and Raphael; and withal enriched with Indian cabinets, such as never were seen in England before, which the queen had brought with her from Portugal.

The great hall had been the scene of many sumptuous banquets. The chapel was rich in carved designs. Her majesty's bedroom, with its curtains of crimson silk, its vast mirror and toilet of beaten and massive gold, was a splendid apartment—the more so from its state bed, which Evelyn says was ‘an embroidery of silver on crimson velvet, and cost £8,000, being a present made by the States of Holland, when his majesty

returned, and had formerly been given by them to our king's sister, y^e Princess of Orange, and, being bought of her againe, was now presented to y^e king.' Around this noble residence, where the court was wont to tarry in summer months, stretched broad and flowerful gardens, with wide parterres, noble statues, sparkling fountains, and marble vases ; and beyond lay the park, planted ' with swete rows of lime-trees.'

And here all day long, in the fair summer time of this year, pleasure held boundless sway. Sauntering in balmy gardens, or seeking shelter from sun-rays in green glades and leafy groves, their majesties, surrounded by their brilliant court, chased bright hours away in frolic and pleasantry, from noon till night. Then revelry, gaining new life, began once more, when courtly figures danced graceful measures to sounds of mirthful strains, under the lustre of innumerable lights.

For a while it seemed as if a brave prospect of happiness was in store for the young queen. Her love for her husband, her delight in his affection, her pride in his accomplishments, together with her simplicity, innocence, and

naïveté, completely won his heart. These claims to his affection were, moreover, strengthened by the charms of her person. Lord Chesterfield, a man whom experience of the sex had made critical, writes that she 'was exactly shaped, has lovely hands, excellent eyes, a good countenance, a pleasing voice, fine hair, and, in a word, what an understanding man would wish for in a wife.' Notwithstanding the attractions of her majesty's person which he enumerates, he adds his fears that 'all these will hardly make things run in the right channel; but, if it should, our court will require a new modelling.' In this note of alarm he forebodes danger to come. A man of his majesty's character, witty and careless, weak and voluptuous, was not likely to reconstruct his court, or reclaim it from ways he loved. Nor was his union calculated to exercise a lasting impression on him. The affection he bore his wife in the first weeks of their married life was due to the novelty he found in her society, together with the absence of temptation in the shape of his mistress. Constancy to the marriage vow was scarcely to be expected from a man whose morals had never been shackled by

restraint; yet faithlessness to a bride was scarcely to be anticipated ere the honeymoon had waned. This was, however, the unhappy fate which awaited Catherine of Braganza.

It happened early in the month of June, whilst the court was at Hampton, my Lady Castlemaine, who had remained in town through illness, gave birth to a second child. The infant was baptized Charles Palmer, adopted by the king as his own, and as such subsequently created Duke of Southampton. This event seemed to renew all his majesty's tenderness towards her. Wearied by the charm of innocence in the person of his wife, his weak nature yielded to the attraction of vice in that of his mistress. He, therefore, frequently left Hampton Court that he might ride to London, visit the countess, and fritter away some hours in her presence; being heedless alike of the insult he dealt the queen, and the scandal he gave the nation.

The while my Lord Castlemaine lived with the lady who shared his title, and whom he called his wife; but their continuance to abide in harmony and goodwill was, soon after the birth of this child, interrupted for ever. My

lord was certainly a loyal subject, but he was likewise a religious man, as may be judged, not by that which has been recorded, but from the narration which follows. Having been bred a Catholic, he was anxious his wife's son should be enrolled a member of the same community. To this end he had him baptized by a priest, a proceeding of which the king wholly disapproved; not because his majesty was attached to any religion in particular, but rather that he resented interference with the infant whom he rested satisfied was his own child. Accordingly, by the king's command, Lady Castlemaine's son was rebaptized by the rector of St. Margaret's, Westminster, in the presence of his majesty, the Earl of Oxford, and the Countess of Suffolk, first lady of the bedchamber to the queen and aunt to the king's mistress.

This exasperated my Lord Castlemaine to such a degree that high words passed between him and his lady: on which he resolved to part from her for ever. However, she was more prompt to act in the matter than he; for, taking advantage of his absence one day, she packed up her jewels, plate, and household treasures, and departed

to the residence of her uncle, Colonel Edward Villiers, at Richmond. This step was probably taken, if not by his majesty's suggestion, at least with his full approval; for the house she selected brought her within an easy distance of Hampton Court court, into which the king designed promptly to introduce her.

Now rumour of the king's liaison had spread beyond the English nation, and had been whispered even at the secluded court of Portugal, into the ears of the bride elect. And the queen regent, dreading the trouble this might draw upon her daughter, had counselled her never to admit his majesty's mistress into her presence. This advice the young queen determined to act upon; and accordingly when Charles, a couple of days after their marriage, presented her with a list of those appointed to her household—amongst whom was my Lady Castlemaine—her majesty drew a pen across the name of the dreaded favourite. The king, if surprised or indignant, made no remark at the time, but none the less held to the resolution he had taken of appointing the countess a lady of the bedchamber. No further attempt of intrud-

ing his mistress's presence upon his wife was made until Lady Castlemaine came to Richmond.

It happened on the afternoon of the day on which the favourite arrived, her majesty sat in the great drawing-room, surrounded by a brilliant throng of noble and beautiful women and gay and gallant men. The windows of the apartment stood open ; outside fountains splashed in the sun ; music played in a distant glade : and all the world seemed glad. And as the queen listened to pleasant sounds of wit and gossip murmuring around her, the courtiers, at sound of a well-known footstep, suddenly ceasing their discourse, fell back on either side adown the room. At that moment the king entered, leading a lady apparelled in magnificent attire, the contour of whose face and outline of whose figure distinguished her as a woman of supreme and sensuous loveliness.

His majesty, exceedingly rich in waving feathers, glittering satins, and fluttering ribbons, returned the gracions bows of his courtiers to right and left ; and, unconscious of the curious and perplexed looks they interchanged, advanced

to where his wife sat, and introduced my Lady Castlemaine. Her majesty bowed and extended her hand, which the countess, having first courteseyed profoundly, raised to her lips. The queen either had not caught the name, or had disassociated it from that of her husband's mistress ; but in an instant the character of the woman presented, and the insult the king had inflicted, flashed upon her mind. Coming so suddenly, it was more than she could bear ; all colour fled from her face, tears rushed to her eyes, blood gushed from her nostrils, and she fell senseless to the floor.

Such strong evidence of the degree in which his young wife felt the indignity forced upon her, by no means softened his majesty's heart towards her, but rather roused his indignation at what he considered public defiance of his authority. But as his nature was remote from roughness, and his disposition inclined to ease, he at first tried to gain his desire by persuasion, and therefore besought the queen she would suffer his mistress to become a lady of the bedchamber. But whenever the subject was mentioned to her majesty, she burst into tears, and would not give

heed to his words. Charles therefore, incensed on his side, deserted her company, and sought the society of those ever ready to entertain him. And as the greater number of his courtiers were fully as licentious as himself, they had no desire he should become subject to his wife, or alter the evil tenor of his ways.

Therefore in their conversation they cited to him the example of his grandfather, King James I., of glorious memory, who had not dissembled his passions, nor suffered the same to become a reproach to those who returned his love; but had obliged his queen to bear with their company, and treat them with grace and favour; and had, moreover, raised his natural children to the degree of princes of the blood. They told Charles he had inherited the disposition of his grandsire, and they were sure he would treat the objects of his affection in like manner as that king had done. Lady Castlemaine, her friends moreover argued, had, by reason of her love for his majesty, parted from her husband; and now that she had been so publicly made an object of the queen's indignation, she would, if abandoned by him, meet with rude contempt from the world.

To such discourses as these the king lent a willing ear, the more as they encouraged him to act according to his desires. He was therefore fully determined to support his mistress ; and firmly resolved to subdue his wife.

Meanwhile, all joyousness vanished from the court ; the queen seemed thoroughly dejected, the king bitterly disappointed, and the courtiers grievously disturbed. Moreover, rumours of the trouble which had risen between their majesties became noised abroad, and gave the people occasion of speaking indifferently of their lord the king. Now Charles in his unhappiness betook himself to the chancellor, who was not only his sage adviser and trusted friend, but who had already gained the esteem and confidence of the queen. My lord, by reason of his services to the late king, and his friendship towards his present majesty, took to himself the privilege of speaking with freedom and boldness whenever his advice was asked by the monarch. As Burnet tells us, the worthy chancellor would never make any application to the king's mistress, nor allow anything to pass the seal in which she was named ; nor would he ever consent to visit her,

which the bishop considered 'was maintaining the decencies of virtue in a very solemn manner.' The king knowing my lord was the only one of all the strangers surrounding the queen whom she believed devoted to her service, and to whose advice she would hearken with trust, therefore bade him represent to her the advisability of obedience.

Whereon the chancellor boldly pointed out to him 'the hard heartedness and cruelty of laying such a command upon the queen, which flesh and blood could not comply with.' He also begged to remind the monarch of what he had heard him say upon the occasion of a like indignity being offered by a neighbouring king to his queen, inasmuch as he had compelled her to endure the presence of his mistress at court. On hearing which King Charles avowed it was 'a piece of ill-nature that he could never be guilty of; and if ever he should be guilty of having a mistress after he had a wife, which he hoped he should never be, she should never come where his wife was; he would never add that to the vexation, of which she would have enough without it.' Finally my lord added that pur-

suit of the course his majesty had resolved on, was a most certain way to lose the respect and affections of his people ; that the excesses he had already fallen into had in some degree lost him ground in their good esteem, but that his continuance of them would 'break the hearts of all his friends, and be grateful only to those who desired the destruction of monarchy.'

Charles heard him with some impatience, but in his reply betrayed that graciousness of manner which, never forsaking him, went far in securing the favour of those with whom he conversed. He commenced by telling the chancellor he felt assured his words were prompted by the affection in which he held him ; and then having by a pathway of courteous speeches found his way to the old man's heart, his majesty broached the subject uppermost in his mind. His conscience and his honour, he said, for he laid claim to both, led him to repair the ruin he had caused Lady Castlemaine's reputation by promoting her to the position of a lady of the bedchamber ; and his gratitude prompted him to avow a friendship for her, 'which he owed as well to the memory of her father as to her own person,' and there-

fore he would not be restrained from her company and her conversation.

Moreover, he had proceeded so far in the business, that if not successful Lady Castlemaine would be subjected to all imaginable contempt, and he exposed to universal ridicule. If, he added, the queen conformed to his wishes in this regard, it would be the only hard thing he should ever require of her; and, indeed, she might make it very easy, for my lady must behave with all possible respect in her presence, otherwise she should never see his face again. Then he begged the chancellor to wait upon her majesty, lay bare his arguments, and urge her to receive the countess with some show of favour. The chancellor, though not pleased with his mission, yet in hope of healing private discord and averting public scandal, undertook to counsel the queen to obedience, and accordingly waited on her in her private apartments.

Now her majesty's education had been such as kept her in complete ignorance of the world's ways. The greater part of her life had been spent in the peaceful retirement of a convent, which she left for her mother's country palace, a

home scarcely less secluded. Maynard, in a letter preserved in the State Paper Office, written from Lisbon when the royal marriage was proposed, says the infanta, 'as sweete a disposition princess as everr was borne,' was 'bred hugely retired. She hath,' he continues, 'hardly been tenn tymes out of the palace in her life. In five years tyme she was not out of doores, untill she hurde of his majestie's intentions to make her queen of England, since which she hath been to visit two saintes in the city; and very shortly shee intends to pay her devotion to some saintes in the country.'

From a life of innocence she was brought for the first time face to face with vice, by one who should have been foremost in shielding her from its contact. All her training taught her to avoid the contamination sought to be forced upon her; all her new born love for her husband prompted her to loath the mistress who shared his affections. A stranger in a strange land, a slighted queen, a neglected wife, an outraged woman, her sufferings were bitter, her wrongs were hard to bear. Therefore, when my lord chancellor came and made known the object

of his visit, she broke into a passion of tears, and could not speak from force of sobs that seemed to rend her heart, and wholly choked her utterance.

The chancellor then retired with some dismay, but waited on her again next day, when he found her more calm. She begged he would excuse the outburst of feeling he had witnessed, but added very pitifully that when she thought of her misfortunes 'she sometimes gave vent to that passion which was ready to break her heart.' The advice, or, as he terms it, 'the evidence of his devotion,' which the chancellor gave was worthy of a courtier and a philosopher. He told the young queen he doubted 'she was little beholden to her education, that had given her no better information of the follies and iniquities of mankind; of which he presumed the climate from whence she came could have given more instances than this cold region would afford.' Had she been properly instructed, he furthermore hinted, she would never have thought herself so miserable, or her condition so insupportable; and indeed he could not comprehend the reason of her loud complaint.

At this she could no longer suppress the tears which came into her dark eyes, and cried out she did not expect to find her husband in love with another woman. Then my lord besought her submission to the king ; but she remained unshaken in the resolution she had formed. She was ready to ask his majesty's pardon for any passion or peevishness she had been guilty of, but added, 'the fire appearing in her eyes where the water was,' she would never endure the presence of his mistress ; and rather than submit to such insult she would 'put herself on board any little vessel' and return to Lisbon.

Back went the chancellor, with a heavy heart and a troubled face, to the king. He softened the queen's words as much as possible, and assured his majesty her resistance to his will proceeded 'from the great passion of love she had for him, which transported her beyond the limits of reason.' But this excuse, which should have rejoiced a husband's heart, only irritated his majesty's temper. That night a violent quarrel took place between the husband and wife, yet scarce more than bride and bride-

groom. When they had retired, the king—being inflamed with the words of his courtiers, who assured him the dispute had now resolved itself into a question of who should govern—reproached the queen with stubbornness and want of duty; upon which she answered by charging him with tyranny and lack of affection. One word borrowed another, till, in his anger, he used threats when she declared she would leave the kingdom. ‘The passion and noise of the night reached too many ears to be a secret the next day,’ says the chancellor, ‘and the whole court was full of that which ought to have been known to nobody.’

When the royal pair met next morning, they neither looked at nor spoke to each other. Days passed full of depression and gloom for the young wife, who spent most of her time in seclusion, whilst the king sought distraction in the society of his courtiers. The chancellor, after his second interview with the queen, absented himself from court, not wishing to be furthermore drawn into a quarrel which he saw himself powerless to heal. During his absence the king wrote him a letter which evinced determina-

tion to carry out his design. This epistle, preserved in the library of the British Museum, runs as follows :

‘HAMPTON COURT, *Thursday Morning.*

‘I forgot when you were here last to desire you to give Broderich good council not to meddle any more with what concerns my Lady Castlemaine, and to let him have a care how he is the author of any scandalous reports ; for if I find him guilty of any such thing, I will make him repent it to the last moment of his life.

‘And now I am entered on this matter, I think it very necessary to give you a little good council in it, lest you may think that by making a farther stir in the business you may divert me from my resolution, which all the world shall never do ; and I wish I may be unhappy in this world and in the world to come, if I fail in the least degree of what I have resolved, which is of making my Lady Castlemaine of my wife’s bedchamber. And whosoever I find in any endeavours to hinder this resolution of mine (except it be only to myself), I will be his enemy to the last moment of my life. You know how true a friend I have been to you ; if you will oblige me eternally, make

this business as easy to me as you can, of what opinion soever you are of; for I am resolved to go through with this matter, let what will come on it, which again I solemnly swear before Almighty God.

‘ Therefore, if you desire to have the continuance of my friendship, meddle no more with this business except it be to bear down all false and scandalous reports, and to facilitate what I am sure my honour is so much concerned in. And whosoever I find is to be my Lady Castlemaine’s enemy in this matter, I do promise, upon my word, to be his enemy as long as I live. You may show this letter to my lord lieutenant, and if you have both a mind to oblige me, carry yourselves like friends to me in this matter.’

The chancellor was, soon after the receipt of this letter, summoned to Hampton Court, when his majesty, with some passion, declared the quarrel was spoken of everywhere, and wholly to his disadvantage. He was therefore anxious to end it at once, and commanded my lord to wait again upon the queen, and persuade her to his wishes. The chancellor informed the king he

‘had much rather spend his pains in endeavouring to convert his majesty from pursuing his resolution, which he did in his conscience believe to be unjust, than in persuading her majesty to comply with it, which yet he would very heartily do.’ Saying which, he departed on his errand; to which the queen answered, her conscience would not allow her to consent that the king’s mistress should be one of her attendants. Then the chancellor besought his royal master, saying he hoped he might be no more consulted with, nor employed concerning an affair, in which he had been so unsuccessful.

By reason of this opposition, the king was now more resolved than ever to honour his mistress and humble his wife; and, with a cruelty unusual to his nature, determined to break her majesty’s spirit, and force her into obedience.

On coming to England, the young bride had brought in her train some Portuguese gentlewomen and nobles, whom she was anxious to employ in various offices about her person, that she might not feel quite in the midst of strangers. These his majesty believed were in some measure answerable for the queen’s resistance to his de-

sires, and therefore decided on sending them back to their own country; knowing, moreover, this was an act which would sorely grieve her majesty. Therefore, without first deigning to inform the Queen of Portugal, he named a day for them to embark. This was a sad blow to the hopes of the Portuguese, who had entertained high expectations of being placed in advantageous circumstances about the court; nor did the king by any show of liberality help to lessen their disappointment. The queen was indeed afflicted at the prospect of their loss; and her mortification was the greater because, having received no money since she came into the kingdom, it was out of her power to make them compensation for their services.

The thought of being deprived of her people in her present unhappy condition rendered her so miserable, that she besought the king to allow some of them to remain; and, likewise, she employed others to make the same petition on her behalf. Therefore one of her ladies, the Countess of Penalva, who had been her attendant since childhood, and who now, because of weakness of sight and other infirmities, scarce ever left

her apartments, was allowed to stay, as were likewise 'those necessary to her religion,' and some servants employed in her kitchen.

But these were not the only means the king took to thwart her majesty and all connected with her. He upbraided the Portuguese ambassador for not having instructed the queen 'enough to make her unconcerned in what had been before her time, and in which she could not reasonably be concerned.' Moreover he reproached him with the fact of the queen regent having sent only half the marriage portion; and so harassed was the ambassador by royal wrath, that he took to his bed, 'and sustained such a fever as brought him to the brink of the grave.' Regarding that part of the dowry which had arrived, Charles behaved in an equally ungracious and undignified manner. He instructed the officers of the revenue to use all strictness in its valuation, and not make any allowances. And because Diego de Silva—whom the queen had designed for her treasurer, and who on that account had undertaken to see the money paid in London—did not make sufficient haste in the settlement of his accounts, he was by the king's command cast into prison.

These various affronts grievously afflicted her majesty, but the insults she had to endure before the whole court wounded her far more. For meanwhile the king lodged his mistress in the royal household, and every day she was present in the drawing-room, when his majesty entered into pleasant conversation with her, while his wife sat patiently by, as wholly unheeded as if unseen. When the queen occasionally rose and indignantly left the apartment to relieve her anguish by a storm of tears, it may be one or two of the courtiers followed her, but the vast number of the brilliant throng remained; and Lord Clarendon adds, 'they, too, often said those things aloud which nobody ought to have whispered.'

Charles no longer appeared with the grave and troubled expression his face had worn at the commencement of the quarrel, but seemed full of pleasantry and eager for enjoyment. Those surrounding him took their tone from the monarch, and followed his example the more because he 'did shew no countenance to any that belong to the queen.' Her majesty, on the contrary, took her misery to heart, and showed dejection.

tion by the sadness of her face and listlessness of her gait. There was universal diversion in all company but hers ; sounds of laughter rang all day and far into the night in every apartment of the palace but those appropriated to her use. Charles steadily avoided her, and the attendants who replaced her countrywomen showed more deference to the king's mistress than to his queen. The solitary condition to which the helpless foreigner and forsaken wife was reduced increased day by day, her gloom deepened hour by hour, until, worn out by the unequal conflict, her spirit broke. 'At last,' says Lord Clarendon, 'when it was least expected or suspected, the queen on a sudden let herself fall, first to conversation, and then to familiarity, and even, in the same instant, to a confidence with the lady ; was merry with her in public, talked kindly of her, and in private used no lady more friendly.'

From that hour her majesty never interfered with the king's amours, and never again did a quarrel rise between them even to the day of his death.

CHAPTER VII.

Their majesties arrive at Whitehall.—My Lady Castlemaine a spectator.—Young Mr. Crofts.—New arrivals at court. The Hamilton family.—The Chevalier de Grammont.—Mrs. Middleton and Miss Kirke.—At the queen's ball.—La belle Hamilton. — The queen mother at Somerset House.—The Duke of Monmouth's marriage.—Fair Frances Stuart.—Those who court her favour.—The king's passion.

ON the 23rd of August, 1662, their majesties journeyed from Hampton Court to the palace of Whitehall by water. The gay and goodly procession formed on that occasion has been described as 'the most magnificent triumph that ever floated on the Thames.' First came barges belonging to city companies, beginning with the mercers and grocers, most of them being attended with a pageant, and all of them richly adorned as became their affection and loyalty. Then followed barges of statesmen,

nobility, and courtiers, with their retinues, brave in numbers, gay in colours, and attended by bands of music. And finally came the king and queen, seated side by side in a galley of antique shape, all draped with crimson damask, bearing a canopy of cloth of gold, supported by Corinthian pillars, wreathed with ribbons, and festooned with garlands of fragrant flowers.

The whole city was abroad, watchful of their approach; the Thames was covered with boats to the number of ten thousand; and the banks were crowded with spectators beyond reckoning. On this fair August day the sky had not a single cloud to mar its universal blue; the sun shone gloriously bright, turning the river to sheets of gleaming gold; whilst the air was filled with roaring of cannon, strains of music, and hearty shouts of a loyal multitude.

Mr. Samuel Pepys, though he offered as much as eight shillings for a boat to attend him that day, could not obtain one, and was therefore obliged to view this gallant procession from the roof of the royal banqueting hall, which commanded a glorious view of the Thames. But

what pleased his erratic fancy best on this occasion was, not the great spectacle he had taken such trouble to survey, but a sight of my Lady Castlemaine, who stood over against him 'upon a piece of Whitehall.' The worthy clerk of the Admiralty 'glutted' himself with looking on her; 'but methought it was strange,' says he, 'to see her lord and her upon the same place walking up and down without taking notice of one another, only at first entry he put off his hat, and she made him a very civil salute, but afterwards took no notice of one another; but both of them now and then would take their child, which the nurse held in her arms, and dandle it. One thing more: there happened a scaffold below to fall, and we feared some hurt, but there was none; but she of all the great ladies only ran down among the common rabble to see what hurt was done, and did take care of a child that received some little hurt, which methought was so noble. Anon there came one there booted and spurred, that she talked long with. And by-and-by, she being in her haire, she put on her hat, which was but an ordinary one, to keep the wind off. But me-

thinks it became her mightily, as everything else do.'

It was notable the countess did not accompany her majesty in the procession to Whitehall, as one of her attendants ; but in fact she had not obtained the position sought for, though she enjoyed all the privileges pertaining to such an appointment. 'Everybody takes her to be of the bedchamber,' the lord chancellor writes to the Duke of Ormond, 'for she is always there, and goes abroad in the coach. But the queen tells me that the king promised her, on condition she would use her as she doth others, that she should never live in court ; yet lodgings I hear she hath.' Lodgings the countess certainly had, provided for her in that block of the palace of Whitehall, separated from the main buildings by the old roadway running between Westminster and the city.

A few days after their majesties' arrival at Whitehall, the queen mother returned to town, and established her court at Somerset House, which had been prepared for her future abode. She had arrived in England before the king and queen left Hampton Court, and had taken up

her residence at Greenwich Palace. The avowed object of her visit was to congratulate them upon their marriage. Charles and his bride therefore took barge to Greenwich, one bright July day, followed by a brilliant and illustrious train, that they might wait upon her majesty. And she, being made aware of their approach, met them at the portal of the palace. There Catherine would have gone down upon her knees to this gracious lady—the survivor of great sorrows—but she took the young queen in her arms, and calling her beloved daughter, kissed her many times. Then she greeted her sons, Charles and James, likewise the Duchess of York, and led them to the presence-chamber, followed by the whole court. And presently when Catherine would, through her interpreter, have expressed her gratitude and affection, the elder queen besought her to lay aside all ceremony, for she ‘should never have come to England again, except for the pleasure of seeing her, to love her as her daughter, and serve her as her queen.’ At these sweet words the young wife, now in the first days of her grief, was almost overcome by a sense of thankfulness,

and could scarce restrain her tears; but she answered bravely, 'Believe me, madam, that in love and obedience neither the king nor any of your children shall exceed me.'

The court of the merry monarch and that of the queen mother being now settled in town, a period of vast brilliancy ensued, during which great festivity and much scandal obtained, by reason of intrigues in which the king and his friends indulged. Whitehall, the scene of so much gaiety and gallantry, was a palace by no means befitting the luxurious Charles. It consisted of a series of irregular houses built for different purposes at various periods; these contained upwards of two thousand rooms, most of which were small, and many of which were without doors. The buildings were intersected by grassy squares, where fountains played, statues were grouped, and dials shadowed the passing hour. At hand stood St. James's Park, with its fair meadows and leafy trees; close by flowed the placid Thames, bearing heavily laden lighters and innumerable barges. Attached to these dwellings, and forming part of the palace, stood the great banquet hall, erected

from designs by Inigo Jones for James I. Here audiences to ambassadors, state balls, and great banquets were held. The ceiling was painted by Rubens, and was, moreover, handsomely moulded and richly gilt. Above the entrance-door stood a statue of Charles I., 'whose majestic mien delighted the spectator;' whilst close by one of the windows were the ineradicable stains of blood, marking the spot near which he had been beheaded.

Now in the train of the queen mother there had travelled from France 'a most pretty sparke of about fourteen years,' whom Mr. Pepys plainly terms 'the king's bastard,' but who was known to the court as young Mr. Crofts. This little gentleman was son of Lucy Walters, 'a brown, beautiful, bold creature,' who had the distinction of being first mistress to the merry monarch. That he was his offspring, the king entertained no doubt, though others did; inasmuch as young Mr. Crofts grew to resemble, 'even to the wart on his face,' Colonel Robert Sidney, whose paramour Lucy Walters had been a brief while before his majesty commenced an intrigue with her. Soon after the boy's birth that

beautiful woman abandoned herself to pleasures, in which the king had no participation. He therefore parted from her, had her son placed under the guardianship of Lord Crofts, whose name he bore, and educated by the Pères de l'Oratoire at Paris. The while he was continually at the court of the queen mother, who regarded him as her grandson, and who, by the king's command, now brought him into England. The beauty of his face and grace of his figure could not be exceeded, whilst his manner was as winning as his air was noble. Moreover, his accomplishments were numerous; he danced to perfection, sang with sweetness, rode with skill; and so gallant was his nature, that he became at this early age, as Hamilton affirms, 'the universal terror of husbands and lovers.'

The king betrayed the greatest affection for him, and took exceeding pride in being father of such a brave and comely youth, at which my Lady Castlemaine was both wrathful and jealous, fearing he would avert the royal favour from her own offspring; but these feelings she afterwards overcame, as will be duly shown. His majesty speedily showered honours upon him,

allotted him a suite of apartments in the royal palace of Whitehall, appointed him a retinue befitting the heir apparent, created him Duke of Orkney and of Monmouth, and installed him a knight of the garter.

But, before all this had been accomplished, there arrived in town some personages whose names it will be necessary to mention here, the figure they made at court being considerable. These were Sir George Hamilton and his family, and Philibert, Chevalier de Grammont. Sir George was fourth son of James, Earl of Abercorn, and of Mary, sister to James, first Duke of Ormond. Sir George had proved himself a loyal man and a brave during the late civil war, and had on the murder of his royal master sought safety in France, from which country he, in the second year of the restoration, returned, accompanied by a large family; the women of which were fair, the men fearless. The Hamiltons being close kin to the Ormonds, great intimacy existed between them; to facilitate which they lived not far apart—the duke residing in Ormond Yard, St. James's Square, and the Hamiltons occupying a spacious

residence in King Street. James Hamilton, Sir George's eldest son, was remarkable for the symmetry of his figure, elegance of his manner, and costliness of his dress. Moreover, he possessed a taste shaped to pleasure, and a disposition inclined to gallantry, which commended him so strongly to the king's favour, that he was made groom of the bedchamber and colonel of a regiment.

His brother George was scarcely less handsome in appearance or less agreeable in manner. Another brother, Anthony, best remembered as the writer of Grammont's memoirs, was likewise liberally endowed by nature. Elizabeth, commonly called 'la belle Hamilton,' shared in the largest degree the hereditary gifts of grace and beauty pertaining to this distinguished family. At her introduction to the court of Charles II. she was in the bloom of youth and zenith of loveliness. The portrait of her which her brother Anthony has set before the world for its admiration is delicate in its colours, and finished in its details. 'Her forehead,' he writes, 'was open, white, and smooth ; her hair was well set, and fell with ease into that natural order which it is

so difficult to imitate. Her complexion was possessed of a certain freshness, not to be equalled by borrowed colours ; her eyes were not large, but they were lovely, and capable of expressing whatever she pleased ; her mouth was full of graces, and her contour uncommonly perfect ; nor was her nose, which was small, delicate, and turned up, the least ornament of so lovely a face. She had the finest shape, the loveliest neck, and most beautiful arms in the world ; she was majestic and graceful in all her movements ; and she was the original after which all the ladies copied in their taste and air of dress.'

Now, about the same time the Hamiltons arrived at court, there likewise appeared at Whitehall one whose fame as a wit, and whose reputation as a gallant, had preceded him. This was the celebrated Chevalier de Grammont, whose father was supposed to be son of Henry the Great of France. The chevalier had been destined by his mother for the church, the good soul being anxious he should lead the life of a saint ; but the youth was desirous of joining the army, and following the career of a soldier. Being remarkable for ingenuity, he conceived a plan by

which he might gratify his mother's wishes and satisfy his own desires at the same time. He therefore accepted the abbacy his brother procured for him; but on appearing at court to return thanks for his preferment, comported himself with a military air. Furthermore, his dress was combined of the habit and bands pertaining to an ecclesiastic, and the buskins and spurs belonging to a soldier. Such an amalgamation had never before been witnessed, and caused general attention; the court was amazed at his daring, but Richelieu was amused by his boldness. His brother regarded his appearance in the dual character of priest and soldier as a freak, and on his return home asked him gravely to which profession he meant to attach himself. The youth answered he was resolved 'to renounce the church for the salvation of his soul,' upon condition that he retained his beneficed abbacy. It may be added, he kept this resolution.

A soldier he therefore became, and subsequently a courtier. His valour in war and luck in gambling won him the admiration of the camp; whilst his ardour in love and genius for

intrigue gained him the esteem of the court, but finally lost him the favour of his king. For attaching himself to one of the maids of honour, Mademoiselle La Motte Houdancourt, whom his most Christian Majesty Louis XIV. had already honoured with his regard, Grammont was banished from the French court.

Accordingly, in the second year of the merry monarch's reign he presented himself at Whitehall, and was received by Charles with a graciousness that served to obliterate the memory of his late misfortune. Nor were the courtiers less warm in their greetings than his majesty. The men hailed him as an agreeable companion ; the ladies intimated he need not wholly abandon those tender diversions for which he had shown such natural talent and received such high reputation at the court of Louis XIV. He therefore promptly attached himself to the king, whose parties he invariably attended, and whose pleasures he continually devised ; made friends with the most distinguished nobles, whom he charmed by the grace of his manner and extravagance of his entertainments ; and took early opportunities of proving

to the satisfaction of many of the fairer sex that his character as a gallant had by no means been exaggerated by report.

Amongst those to whom he paid especial attention were Mrs. Middleton, a woman of fashion, and Miss Kirk, a maid of honour, to whom Hamilton, in his memoirs of Grammont, gives the fictitious name of Warmestre. The former was at this time in her seventeenth summer, and had been two years a wife. Her exquisitely fair complexion, light auburn hair, and dark hazel eyes constituted her a remarkably beautiful woman. Miss Kirk was of a different type of loveliness, inasmuch as her skin was brown, her eyes dark, and her complexion brilliant. As Mrs. Middleton was at this time but little known at court, Grammont found some difficulty in obtaining an introduction to her as promptly as he desired; but feeling anxious to make her acquaintance, and being no laggard in love, he without hesitation applied to her porter for admittance, and took one of her lovers into his confidence. This latter gallant rejoiced in the name of Jones, and subsequently became Earl of Ranelagh. In the fulness of his heart towards

one who experienced a fellow feeling, he resolved to aid Grammont in gaining the lady's favours. This generosity being prompted by the fact that the chevalier would rid him of a rival whom he feared, and at the same time relieve him of an expense he could ill afford, the lady having certain notions of magnificence which her husband's income was unable to sustain.

Mrs. Middleton received the chevalier with good grace; but he found her more ready to receive the presents he offered, than to grant the privileges he required. Miss Kirk, on the other hand, was not only flattered by his attentions, but was willing to use every means in her power to preserve a continuance of his friendship. Therefore, out of gratitude for graces received from one of the ladies, and in expectation of favours desired from the other, Grammont made them the handsomest presents. Perfumed gloves, pocket looking-glasses, apricot paste, came every week from Paris for their benefit; whilst more substantial offerings in the shape of jewellery, diamonds, and guineas were procured for them in London, all of which they made no hesitation to accept.

It happened one night, whilst Grammont was yet in pursuit of Mrs. Middleton, that the queen gave a ball. In hope of winning her husband's affection, by studying his pleasures and suiting herself to his ways, her majesty had become a changed woman. She now professed a passion for dancing, wore décolleté costumes, and strove to surpass those surrounding her in her desire for gaiety. Accordingly her balls were the most brilliant spectacles the court had yet witnessed; she taking care to assemble the fairest women of the day, and the most distinguished men. Now amongst the latter was the Chevalier de Grammont; and amidst the former, Mrs. Middleton and Miss Hamilton.

Of all the court beauties, 'la belle Hamilton' was one of whom Grammont had seen least and heard most; but that which had been told him of her charms seemed, now that he beheld her, wholly inadequate to express her loveliness. Therefore, his eyes followed her alone, as her graceful figure glided in the dance adown the ball-room, lighted with a thousand tapers, and brilliant with every type of beauty. And when presently she rested, it was with an unusual

flutter at his heart that this gallant, heretofore so daring in love, sought her company, addressed her, and listened with strange pleasure to the music of her voice. From that night he courted Mrs. Middleton no more, but devoted himself to 'la belle Hamilton,' who subsequently became his wife.

Meanwhile, the merry monarch behaved as if he had no higher purpose in life than that of following his pleasures. 'The king is as decomposed [dissipated] as ever,' the lord chancellor writes to the Duke of Ormond, in a letter preserved in the Bodleian library, 'and looks as little after his business; which breaks my heart, and makes me and other of your friends weary of our lives. He seeks for his satisfaction and delight in other company, which do not love him so well as you and I do.' His days were spent in pursuing love, feasting sumptuously, interchanging wit, and enjoying all that seemed good to the senses. Pepys, who never fails to make mention of the court when actual experience or friendly gossip enables him, throws many pleasant lights upon the ways of the monarch and his courtiers.

For instance, he tells us that one Lord's day—the same on which this excellent man had been to Whitehall chapel, and heard a sermon by the Dean of Ely on returning to the old ways, and, moreover, a most tuneful anthem sung by Captain Cooke, with symphonies between—whom should he meet but the great chirurgion, Mr. Pierce, who carried him to Somerset House, and into the queen mother's presence-chamber. And there, on the left hand of Henrietta Maria, sat the young queen, whom Mr. Pepys had never seen before, and now thought that 'though she be not very charming, yet she hath a good, modest, and innocent look, which is pleasing.' Here, likewise, he saw the king's mistress, and the young Duke of Monmouth, 'who, I perceive,' Pepys continues, 'do hang much upon my Lady Castlemaine, and is always with her; and I hear the queenes, both of them, are mighty kind to him. By-and-by in comes the king, and anon the duke and his duchesse; so that, they being all together, was such a sight as I never could almost have happened to see with so much ease and leisure. They staid till it was dark, and then went away; the king and his queene, and

my Lady Castlemaine and young Crofts, in one coach, and the rest in other coaches. Here were great stores of great ladies. The king and queen were very merry; and he would have made the queene mother believe that the queene was with child, and said that she said so. And the young queene answered, "You lye," which was the first English word that I ever heard her say, which made the king good sport.'

Others besides Mr. Pepys had begun to notice that the young Duke of Monmouth hung much upon the Countess of Castlemaine, and that her ladyship lavished caresses upon him. Whether this was to provoke the uneasiness of his majesty, who she hoped might find employment for the lad elsewhere, or to express her genuine affection for him, it is impossible to say. However, the duke being come to an age when the endearments of such a woman might have undesired effects upon him, the king resolved to remove him from her influence, and at the same time secure his fortune by marriage.

He therefore selected a bride for him, in the person of Lady Anne Scott, a young gentlewoman of virtue and excellence, who was

only child of Francis, Earl of Buccleugh, and the greatest heiress in Great Britain. Their nuptials were celebrated on the 20th of April, 1663, the bridegroom at this time not having reached his fifteenth birthday, whilst the bride was younger by a year. The duke on his marriage assumed his wife's family name, Scott; and some years later—in 1673—both were created Duke and Duchess of Buccleugh. From this union the family now bearing that title has descended. A great supper was given at Whitehall on the marriage-night, and for many days there were stately festivities held to celebrate the event with becoming magnificence.

Now at one of the court balls held at this time, the woman of all others who attracted most attention and gained universal admiration was Frances Stuart, maid of honour to Queen Catherine. She was only daughter of a gallant gentleman, one Walter Stuart, and granddaughter of Lord Blantyre. Her family had suffered sore loss in the cause of Charles I., by reason of which, like many others, it sought refuge in France. This young gentlewoman

was therefore bred in that country, and was, moreover, attached to the court of the queen mother, in whose suite she travelled into England. Her beauty was such as to attract the attention of Louis XIV., who, loath to lose so fair an ornament from his court, had requested her mother would permit her to remain, saying, he 'loved her not as a mistress, but as one that would marry as well as any lady in France.'

No doubt Mrs. Stuart understood the motives of his majesty's interested kindness, of which, however, she declined availing herself, and therefore set out with her daughter for England. At the time of her appearance at Whitehall, Frances Stuart was in her fifteenth year. Even in a court distinguished by the beauty of women, her loveliness was declared unsurpassed. Her features were regular and refined, her complexion fair as alabaster, her hair bright and luxuriant, her eyes of violet hue; moreover, her figure being tall, straight, and shapely, her movements possessed an air of exquisite grace. An exact idea of her lineaments may be gained unto this day, from the fact that Philip Rotier,

the medallist, who loved her true, represented her likeness in the face of Britannia on the reverse of coins; and so faithful was the likeness, we are assured, that no one who had ever seen her could mistake who had sat as model of the figure.

Soon after her arrival in England, she was appointed one of the maids of honour to Queen Catherine, and as such was present at all festivities of the court. Now, at one of the great balls given in honour of the Duke of Monmouth's nuptials, the fair Frances Stuart appeared in the full lustre of her charms. Her beauty, her grace, and her youth completely eclipsed the more showy gifts of my Lady Castlemaine, who on this occasion looked pale and thin, she being in the commencement of another pregnancy, 'which the king was pleased to place to his own account.' The merry monarch had before this time been attracted by the fair maid of honour, but now it was evident his heart had found a new object of admiration in her surpassing beauty. Henceforth he boldly made love to her. The countess was not much disturbed by this, for she possessed great faith in

her own charms and implicit belief in her power over the king. Besides, she had sufficient knowledge of mankind to comprehend that to offer opposition in pursuit of love is the most certain method to foster its growth. She therefore resolved to seek Miss Stuart's society, cultivate her friendship, and constantly bring her into contact with his majesty. This would not only prove to the satisfaction of the court she had no fear of losing her sovereignty over the monarch, but, by keeping him engaged with the maid of honour, would likewise divert his attention from an intrigue the countess was then carrying on with Henry Jermyn. Accordingly, she made overtures of friendship to Miss Stuart, invited her to private parties, and appeared continually with her in public.

Concerning these ladies and the merry monarch, Pepys narrates a strange story which Captain Ferrers told him as they 'walked finely' in the park. This was, that at an entertainment given by my Lady Castlemaine, towards the end of which his majesty played at being married with fair Frances Stuart, 'with ring and all other ceremonies of Church service, and ribbands, and

a sack posset* in bed, and flinging the stocking. My Lady Castlemaine looked on the while, evincing neither anger nor jealousy, but entering into the diversion with great spirit. Nor was this the only indiscretion of which she was culpable, for, in the full confidence of her charms, she frequently kept Miss Stuart to stay with her. 'The king,' says Hamilton, 'who seldom neglected to visit the countess before she rose, seldom failed likewise to find Miss Stuart with her. The most indifferent objects have charms in a new attachment; however, the imprudent countess was not jealous of this rival's appearing with her, in such a situation, being confident that, whenever she thought fit, she could triumph over all the advantages which these opportunities could afford Miss Stuart.'

No doubt Lady Castlemaine's imprudences arose from knowledge that Miss Stuart was devoid of tact, and incapable of turning opportunities to her own advantage in the king's regard. For though the maid of honour was richly endowed with beauty, she was wholly devoid of wit. She was not only a child in

* A drink composed of milk, wine, and spices.

years, but likewise in behaviour. She laughed at every remark made her, delighted in playing blind man's buff, and was never more happy than when building castles of cards. At this latter amusement she continually employed herself whilst the deepest play was taking place in her apartments; being always attended by groups of courtiers, who were either attracted by the charm of her beauty, or were eager to make court through her favour. As she sat upon the floor, intent on her favourite occupation, they on their knees handed her cards, traced out designs for her, or built elaborate structures rivalling her own.

Amongst those who attended her in this manner was the gay, graceful, and profligate Duke of Buckingham, who became enamoured of her loveliness. Not only did he raise the most wonderful of card mansions for her delight, but having a good voice, and she possessing a passion for music, he invented songs and sung them to pleasure her. Moreover, he told her the wittiest stories, turned the courtiers into the greatest ridicule for her entertainment, and made her acquainted with the most diverting scandals. Finally, he professed his ardent love for her; but

at this the fair Stuart either felt, or feigned, intense astonishment, and so repulsed him that he abandoned the pursuit of an amour over which he had wasted so much time, and thenceforth deprived himself of her company.

His attentions were, however, soon replaced by those of the Earl of Arlington, a lord of the bedchamber, and a man of grave address and great ambition. Owing to this latter trait his lordship was desirous of winning the good graces of Miss Stuart in the present, in hopes of governing his majesty in the future, when she became the king's mistress. But these sage and provident intentions of his were speedily overturned, for early in the course of their acquaintance, when he had commenced to tell her a story, his manner so forcibly reminded her of Buckingham's mimicry of him, that she burst out laughing in the earl's face. This being utterly uncalled for by the circumstances of his tale, and still less by the manner of its narration, Lord Arlington, who was serious, punctilious, and proud, became enraged, abruptly left her presence, and abandoned his schemes of governing the king through so frivolous a medium.

A man who had better chances of success in winning this beautiful girl was George Hamilton, whose name has been already mentioned. It was not, however, his graceful person, or elegant manner, but his performance of a trick which gained her attention. It happened one night that an Irish peer, old Lord Carlingford, was diverting her by showing how she might hold a burning candle in her mouth a considerable time without its being extinguished. This was a source of uncommon delight to her; seeing which, George Hamilton thought he would give her still further entertainment. For being furnished by nature with a wide mouth, he placed within it two lighted candles, and walked three times round the room without extinguishing them, whilst the fair Stuart clapped her pretty hands in delight, and shouted aloud with laughter.

A man who could accomplish such a feat was worthy of becoming a favourite. She at once admitted him to terms of familiarity; and he had a hundred chances of paying her the attentions he greatly desired, and which she freely accepted. Grammont, foreseeing that Hamilton

would incur the royal displeasure if his love for Miss Stuart became known to the king, besought him to abandon his addresses; but this advice did not at first sound pleasant to the lover's ears. 'Since the court has been in the country,' said he, 'I have had a hundred opportunities of seeing her, which I had not before. You know that the dishabille of the bath is a great convenience for those ladies, who, strictly adhering to all the rules of decorum, are yet desirous to display all their charms and attractions. Miss Stuart is so fully acquainted with the advantages she possesses over all other women, that it is hardly possible to praise any lady at court for a well-turned arm, and a fine leg, but she is ever ready to dispute the point by demonstration; and I really believe that, with a little address, it would not be difficult to induce her to strip naked, without ever reflecting upon what she was doing. After all, a man must be very insensible to remain unconcerned and unmoved on such happy occasions.'

Hamilton was therefore not willing to renounce Miss Stuart, but upon Grammont showing that attentions paid the lady would

certainly provoke the king's anger, he resolved on sacrificing love to interest, and abandoning the company of the fair maid of honour for evermore. The truth was, his majesty loved her exceedingly, as was indeed evident, for he constantly sought her presence, talked to her at the drawing-rooms as if no one else were by, and kissed her 'to the observation of all the world.' But though she allowed Charles such liberties, she refused to become his mistress, notwithstanding the splendid settlements and high titles with which the monarch engaged to reward the sacrifice of her virtue. And so, though a king, it was not given him to be obeyed in all. And though generally loved for his easy ways and gracious manners, he was continually harassed by his mistresses, reproved by his chancellor, and ridiculed by his courtiers. Indeed, they now spoke of him in his absence as 'old Rowley:' the reason of which is given by Richardson. 'There was an old goat,' writes he, 'in the privy garden, that they had given this name to: a rank lecherous devil, that everybody knew and used to stroke, because he was good-humoured and familiar; and so they applied this name to the king.'

CHAPTER VIII.

The Duke of York's intrigues.—My Lady Chesterfield and his royal highness.—The story of Lady Southesk's love.—Lord Arran plays the guitar.—Lord Chesterfield is jealous.—The countess is taken from court.—Mistress Margaret Brooke and the king.—Lady Denham and the duke.—Sir John goes mad.—My lady is poisoned.

THE while his majesty devoted himself to pleasure and intrigue, neglectful of affairs of state, and heedless of public scandal, his brother of York, whose disposition was not less amorous, likewise followed the bent of his inclinations. Soon after her appearance at court he professed himself in love with the beautiful Elizabeth Hamilton, whom to behold was to admire. But the duke being a married man, and she a virtuous woman, he dared not address her on the subject of his affection, and was therefore obliged to confine the expression of his feelings to glances. These

she refused to interpret; and he, becoming weary of a pursuit which promised no happy results, turned his attentions to the Countess of Chesterfield, who seemed in no way loath to receive them.

This charming woman had married my Lord Chesterfield in compliance with a family arrangement; and discovered too soon she had no place in the heart of him whose life she shared. His coldness to her was only equalled by his ardour for Lady Castlemaine, whose lover he continued to remain after his marriage. The affection his wife had offered and he had repulsed, in the dawn of their wedded life, changed by degrees to disdain and hatred.

Now as chamberlain to the queen my Lord Chesterfield had apartments in the palace, by reason of which the countess became an habitu  of the court. The moral atmosphere of Whitehall was not calculated to strengthen her conjugal virtue, but its perpetual gaiety was destined to dissipate her sense of neglect. It was not possible for a woman endowed with so much beauty, and possessed of such engaging manners, to be disregarded, in a court entirely devoted to love and gallantry; and accordingly

she soon became an object of general admiration. This was by no means pleasing to my Lord Chesterfield, who, though he had wilfully repulsed her affections, was selfishly opposed to their bestowal upon others. Accordingly he became watchful of her conduct, and jealous of her admirers.

Prominent amongst these were James Hamilton and the Duke of York. The former was her cousin, and her husband's confidant, in consequence of which my lord failed to associate him with the suspicion he entertained towards all other men who approached her: the latter he regarded with the uttermost distrust. His royal highness had before now disturbed the happy confidence which husbands had placed in their wives, as my Lord Carnegy could testify.

The story which hangs thereby had, a little while before the duke fell in love with Lady Chesterfield, afforded vast amusement to the court, and was yet fresh in the recollection of many. It happened that his royal highness became enamoured of my Lady Carnegy, daughter of the gallant Duke of Hamilton, and friend of the gay Lady Castlemaine. Lady

Carnegy loved pleasure mightily, painted her face 'devilishly,' and drove in the park flauntingly. She was endowed with considerable beauty of form and great tenderness of heart, as many gallants acknowledged with gratitude. Now when the Duke of York made advances to her, she received them with all the satisfaction he could desire; an intimacy therefore followed, which she was the better able to entertain on account of her husband's absence in Scotland. Whilst my Lord Carnegy was in that country, his father, the Earl of Southesk, died, and he succeeded to the title and estates. In due time the new earl returned to London and his wife, and was greeted by rumours of the friendship which in his absence had sprung up between my lady and the duke. These, as became a good husband, he refused to believe, until such time as he was enabled to prove their veracity. Now, though his royal highness did not cease to honour my lady with his visits on her husband's return, yet out of respect to decorum, and in order to silence scandalous tongues, he from that time invariably called on her accompanied by a friend.

It therefore came to pass that one day he requested an honest, foolish Irishman, Dick Talbot, afterwards Duke of Tyrconnel, to attend him in his visit to the lady. He could scarcely have selected a man more unfitted to the occasion, inasmuch as Talbot was wholly devoid of tact, and possessed a mind apt to wander at large at critical moments. He had but recently returned from Portugal, and was not aware my Lord Carnegy had in the meantime become Earl of Southesk, nor had he ever met the lady who shared that title until introduced to her by the duke. When that ceremony had been duly performed, and a few sentences interchanged between them, Talbot, acting on instructions previously received, retired into an ante-room, and took his post at a window, that he might divert himself by viewing the street, and observing those who approached the house.

Here he remained for some time, but the study of mankind which the view admitted did not afford sufficient interest to prevent him becoming absorbed in his own thoughts, and indifferent to all objects surrounding him. From this mental condition he was presently aroused by seeing a

carriage draw up to the door, and its occupant descend and quickly enter the house. Talbot was so forgetful of his duty, that he omitted apprising the duke of this fact, or making any movement until the door of the ante-room opened, when he turned round to face the intruder. Then he started forward and cried out, 'Welcome, Carnegy!' for it was no other than he. 'Welcome, my good fellow! Where the devil have you been, that I have never been able to set eyes on you since we were at Brussels? What business brought you here?' he continued in the same breath; and then added in a tone of banter, 'Do you likewise wish to see Lady Southesk? If this is your intention, my poor friend, you may go away again; for I must inform you the Duke of York is in love with her, and I will tell you in confidence that at this very time he is in her chamber.'

My Lord Southesk was overwhelmed with shame and confusion, and not knowing how to act, immediately returned to his coach, Talbot attending him to the door as his friend, and advising him to seek a mistress elsewhere. He then went back to his post, and with some impatience

awaited the duke's return, that he might tell him what had happened. And in due time, when he had narrated the story, he was much surprised that neither his royal highness nor the countess saw any humour in the fact of Lord Carnegy's discomfiture. It served, however, to make the duke break off his connection with the lady, and likewise to amuse the town.

Remembering this incident, my Lord Chesterfield kept a watchful eye upon the duke, whom he observed made advances towards the countess, which she, in her generosity, had not the heart to repulse. But, as his royal highness could see her only in presence of the court, my lord derived some satisfaction from knowing he was witness to such civilities as had yet passed between them. The duke was, however, anxious to have a more particular occasion of conversing with my lady, and in accomplishing this desire her brother Lord Arran was willing to aid him.

It happened about this time an Italian, named Francisco Corbeta, who played with great perfection on the guitar, arrived at court. His performances excited the wonder and delight of

all who heard him, and the instrument which produced such melody speedily became fashionable at court, to such an extent, that a universal strumming was heard by day and by night throughout the palace of Whitehall. The Duke of York, being devoted to music, was amongst those who strove to rival Signor Francisco's performance; whilst my Lord Arran, by the delicacy of his execution, almost equalled the great musician. The while Francisco's popularity increased, his fame reaching its zenith when he composed a saraband, to learn which became the ambition of all delighting in the guitar.

Now one day the duke, not thinking himself perfect in this piece, requested Lord Arran to play it over for him. My lord being a courteous man, was anxious to oblige his royal highness, and in order that the saraband might be heard to greatest advantage, was desirous of performing it upon the best instrument at court, which it was unhesitatingly acknowledged belonged to my Lady Chesterfield. Accordingly, Lord Arran led the duke to his sister's apartments. Here they found not only the guitar and my lady, but likewise

my lord, who was no less astonished than disturbed by their visit. Then my Lord Arran commenced the famous saraband, whilst the duke commenced to ogle my lady, and she to return his glances in kind, as if both were unconscious of her husband's presence. So delightful did they find the saraband, that Lord Arran was obliged to repeat it at least twenty times, to the great mortification of the earl, who could scarcely contain his violent rage and jealousy. His torture was presently increased to an immeasurable degree, by a summons he received from the queen to attend her in his capacity of lord chamberlain, during an audience she was about to give the Muscovite ambassador.

He had from the first suspected the visit, with which he was honoured, to have been preconcerted by his wife and the duke; and he now began to think her majesty was likewise connected with a plot destined to rob him of his peace and blight his honour. However, he was obliged to obey the queen's summons and depart. Nor had he been many minutes absent when Lord Arran entered the presence-chamber where the audience was being held, unaccompanied by the

duke, at which Lord Chesterfield's jealous fears were strengthened a thousand-fold. Before night came he was satisfied he held sufficient proof of his wife's infidelity.

This conviction caused him intense anxiety and pain; he walked about his apartments abstracted and brooding on the wrongs from which he suffered; avoided all who came in his way; and maintained strict silence as to that which disturbed his peace, until next day, when he met James Hamilton. To him he confided an account of the troubles which beset him. After speaking of the visit paid by his royal highness, and the part enacted by my Lord Arran, whom he described as 'one of the silliest creatures in England, with his guitar, and his other whims and follies,' he went on to say that when Hamilton had heard him out, he would be enabled to judge whether the visit ended in perfect innocence or not. 'Lady Chesterfield is amiable, it must be acknowledged,' said he, 'but she is far from being such a miracle of beauty as she supposes herself: you know she has ugly feet; but perhaps you are not acquainted that she has still worse legs. They are short and thick, and to

remedy these defects as much as possible, she seldom wears any other than green stockings. I went yesterday to Miss Stuart's after the audience of those damned Muscovites: the king arrived there just before me; and as if the duke had sworn to pursue me wherever I went that day, he came in just after me. The conversation turned upon the extraordinary appearance of the ambassadors. I know not where that fool Crofts had heard that all these Muscovites had handsome wives; and that all their wives had handsome legs. Upon this the king maintained, that no woman ever had such handsome legs as Miss Stuart; and she, to prove the truth of his majesty's assertion, with the greatest imaginable ease, immediately showed her leg above the knee. Some were ready to prostrate themselves in order to adore its beauty, for indeed none can be handsomer; but the duke alone began to criticize upon it. He contended that it was too slender, and that as for himself he would give nothing for a leg that was not thicker and shorter, and concluded by saying that no leg was worth anything without green stockings; now this in my opinion was a sufficient demon-

stration that he had just seen green stockings, and had them fresh in his remembrance.'

At hearing this story, Hamilton, being deeply in love with Lady Chesterfield, was scarcely less agitated or less jealous than her lord; but he was obliged to conceal his feelings. Therefore, assuming the tone of an impartial hearer, he shrugged his shoulders, declared appearances were often deceitful, and maintained that even if she had given herself airs to encourage the duke, there were no grounds to show she had been culpable of improprieties. My lord expressed himself much obliged to his friend for the interest he had shown in his troubles, and after exchanging a few compliments they parted. Hamilton, full of wrath, returned home, and wrote a letter replete with violent expostulations and tender reproaches to the woman he loved. This he delivered to her secretly at the next opportunity. She received it from him with a smile, which scared all doubts of her frailty from his mind, and with a pressure of his hand which awoke the tenderest feelings in his heart.

He was now convinced her husband had allowed jealousy to blind him, and had magni-

fied his unworthy suspicions to assurances of guilt. In this view Hamilton was fully confirmed by a letter he received from her the following day in answer to his own. 'Are you not,' said she, 'ashamed to give any credit to the visions of a jealous fellow, who brought nothing else with him from Italy? Is it possible that the story of the green stockings, upon which he has founded his suspicions, should have imposed upon you, accompanied as it is with such pitiful circumstances? Since he has made you his confidant, why did not he boast of breaking in pieces my poor harmless guitar? This exploit, perhaps, might have convinced you more than all the rest; recollect yourself, and if you are really in love with me, thank fortune for a groundless jealousy, which diverts to another quarter the attention he might pay to my attachment for the most amiable and the most dangerous man at court.'

Anointed by this flattering unction, such wounds as Hamilton had experienced were quickly healed; alas, only to bleed afresh at the certain knowledge that this charming woman had been making him her dupe! For soon after,

in a moment of indiscretion, and whilst the whole court, including her majesty, was assembled in the card-room, my lady there permitted the duke a liberty which confirmed her husband in his suspicions of their intimacy. Hamilton at hearing this was wild with fury, and advised Lord Chesterfield to carry her away from the allurements of the court, and seclude her in one of his country mansions. This was an advice to which the earl listened with complaisance, and carried out with despatch, to her intense mortification.

The whole court was amused by the story, but dismayed at the punishment my lord inflicted upon his lady. Anthony Hamilton declares that in England ‘they looked with astonishment upon a man who could be so uncivil as to be jealous of his wife; and in the city of London it was a prodigy, till that time unknown, to see a husband have recourse to violent means to prevent what jealousy fears, and what it always deserves.’ He adds, they endeavoured to excuse my lord by laying all the blame on his bad education, which made ‘all the mothers vow to God that none of their sons should ever set a foot in

Italy, lest they should bring back with them that infamous custom of laying restraint upon their wives.'

By the departure of Lady Chesterfield the court lost one of its most brilliant ornaments for ever, for the unhappy countess never again returned to the gay scene of her adventures. For three long years she endured banishment at Bretby in Derbyshire, and then died, it was believed, from the effects of poison. For my lord, never having his suspicions of her intrigue cleared, insisted on her taking the sacrament by way of pledging her innocence; on which occasion he, in league with his chaplain, mixed poison in the sacred wine, as result of which she died. This shocking story gained credence not only with the public, but with members of his own family; inasmuch as his daughter-in-law, Lady Gertrude Stanhope, after she had quarrelled with him, would, when she sat at his table, drink only of such wine and water as a trusty servant of hers procured.

This intrigue of the duke had given much uneasiness to his duchess, who had complained to the king and to her father, and had, moreover,

set a watch upon the movements of his royal highness. But such measures did not avail to make him a faithful husband, and no sooner was Lady Chesterfield removed from his sight, than Lady Denham took her place in his affections. This latter mentioned gentlewoman was daughter of a valiant baronet, Sir William Brooke, and niece to a worthless peer, the Earl of Bristol. The earl had, on the king's restoration, cherished ambitious schemes to obtain the merry monarch's favour ; for which purpose he sought to commend himself by ministering to the royal pleasures.

Accordingly he entertained the king as became a loyal gentleman, giving him luxurious banquets and agreeable suppers, to which, by way of adding to his majesty's greater satisfaction, the noble host invited his nieces, Mistress Brooke and her sister. The wily earl had, indeed, conceived a plan the better to forward his interests with the king, and was desirous one of these gentlewomen should subdue his majesty's heart, and become his mistress. Margaret Brooke, the elder of the maidens, was at this time in her eighteenth year, and was in the full

flower of such loveliness as was presented by a fair complexion, light brown hair, and dark grey eyes. The merry monarch's susceptible heart was soon won by her beauty; the charming lady's amorous disposition was speedily conquered by his gallantry, and nothing prevented her becoming his mistress save Lady Castlemaine's jealousy.

This, however, proved an insurmountable obstacle; for the countess, hearing rumours of the pleasures which were enjoyed at my Lord Bristol's table, insisted on attending the king thither, and soon gave his gracious majesty an intimation he dared not disregard—that she would not suffer Miss Brooke as a rival. Margaret Brooke was grievously disappointed; but the Duke of York beginning his attentions at the point where his majesty discontinued them, she was soon consoled for loss of the monarch's affection by the ardour of his brother's love. But a short time after, probably foreseeing the ambiguous position in which she stood, she forsook her lover, and accepted a husband in the person of Sir John Denham.

This worthy knight was a man of parts; inas-

much as he was a soldier, a poet, and a gamester. At the time of his marriage he had passed his fiftieth year; moreover, he limped painfully and carried a crutch. His appearance, indeed, was far from imposing. According to Aubrey, he was tall, had long legs, and was 'incurvelting at his shoulders; his hair was but thin and flaxen, with a moist curl; his gait slow and rather astalking; his eye was a kind of light goose-grey, not big, but it had a strange piercingness, not as to shining and glory, but when he conversed he looked into your very thoughts.' His personal defects, however, were to a great degree compensated for by his great wealth. Moreover, he was surveyor-general of his majesty's works, had a town house in Scotland Yard, and a country residence at Waltham Cross in Essex. But there are some deficiencies for which wealth does not atone, as no doubt Lady Denham promptly discovered; for, before a year of her married life had passed, she renewed her intrigue with the Duke of York. His love for her seemed to have increased a thousandfold since fate had given her to the possession of another. At royal drawingrooms he took her aside and talked to

her 'in the sight of all the world,' and whenever she moved away from him he followed her like a dog.

Indeed, he made no effort to screen his passion, for not only did he make love to her in presence of the court, but he visited her at noonday, attended by his gentlemen, before all the town. Nor did Lady Denham desire to conceal the honour with which, she considered, this amour covered her, but openly declared she would 'not be his mistress, as Mrs. Price, to go up and down the privy stairs, but will be owned publicly;' and in this respect she obtained her desire. Meanwhile Sir John was rendered miserable; and, indeed, his desperation soon overthrew his reason, and rendered him a lunatic. This affliction first appeared during a journey he made to the famous free-stone quarries near Portland in Dorset. When he came within a mile of his destination, he suddenly turned back, and proceeded to Hounslow, where he demanded rents for lands he had disposed of years before; and then hastening to town sought out the king and informed him he was the Holy Ghost.

This madness lasted but a short time; and

the first use he made of his recovered senses was to plot vengeance on his wife. Now there was one honour which she coveted above all others, that of being appointed a lady of the bedchamber to the Duchess of York. This her royal lover, following the example of his majesty, sought to obtain for her; but the duchess, who had already suffered many indignities by reason of her husband's improprieties, refused him this request, which would render her liable to continual insult in her own court. The duke, however, had a strong will, and the duchess was on the point of yielding to his demand, when rumour announced that Lady Denham had been taken suddenly ill, and scandal declared she had been poisoned. The wildest sensation followed. His royal highness, stricken with remorse and terror, hastened to Scotland Yard and sought his beloved mistress, who told him she believed herself poisoned, and felt she was now dying. The most eminent physicians were speedily summoned, but their skill proved of no avail, for she gradually became worse, and finally died, leaving instructions that her body should be opened after death, in order that search might be made for the fatal drug.

The surgeons followed these directions, as we learn from the Orrery state papers, but no trace of poison was discovered. For all that the public had no doubt her husband had destroyed her life, and Hamilton tells us the populace 'had a design of tearing Sir John in pieces as soon as he should come abroad ; but he shut himself up to bewail her death, until their fury was appeased by a magnificent funeral, at which he distributed four times more burnt wine than had ever been drunk at any burial in England.'

As for the duke, he was sorely troubled for her loss, and declared he should never have a public mistress again.

CHAPTER IX.

Court life under the merry monarch.—Riding in Hyde Park. Sailing on the Thames.—Ball at Whitehall.—Petit soupers.—What happened at Lady Gerrard's.—Lady Castlemaine quarrels with the king.—Flight to Richmond.—The queen falls ill.—The king's grief and remorse.—Her majesty speaks.—Her secret sorrow finds voice in delirium.—Frances Stuart has hopes.—The queen recovers.

VIEWS of court life during the first years of the merry monarch's reign, obtainable from works of his contemporaries, present a series of brilliant, changeful, and interesting pictures. Scarce a day passed that their majesties, attended by a goodly throng of courtiers, went not abroad, to the vast delight of the town: and rarely a night sped by unmarked by some magnificent entertainment, to the great satisfaction of the court. At noon it was a custom of the king and queen, surrounded by maids of honour and

gentlemen in waiting, the whole forming a glad-some and gallant crowd, to ride in coaches or on horseback in Hyde Park: which place has been described as 'a field near the town, used by the king and nobility for the freshness of the air, and goodly prospect.'

Here in a railed-off circle, known as the ring, and situated in the northern half of the park, the whole world of fashion and beauty diverted itself. Noble gallants wearing broad-brimmed hats and waving plumes, doublets of velvet, and ruffles of rich lace; and fair women with flowing locks and dainty patches, attired in satin gowns, and cloaks wrought with embroidery, drove round and round, exchanging salutations and smiles as they passed. Here it was good Mr. Pepys saw the Countess of Castlemaine, among many fine ladies, lying 'impudently upon her back in her coach asleep, with her mouth wide open.' And on another occasion the same ingenious gentleman observed the king and my lady pass and repass in their respective coaches, they greeting one another at every turn.

But Mr. Pepys gives us another picture, in which he shows us the king riding right gal-

lantly beside his queen, and therefore presents him to better advantage. This excellent gossip, sauntering down Pall Mall one bright summer-day, it being the middle of July, in the year 1663, met the queen mother walking there, led by her supposed husband, the Earl of St. Albans. And, hearing the king and queen rode abroad with the ladies of honour to the park, and seeing a great crowd of gallants awaiting their return, he also stayed, walking up and down the while. ‘By-and-by,’ says he, ‘the king and queene, who looked in this dress (a white laced waistcoate and a crimson short pettycoate, and her hair dressed *à la négligence*) mighty pretty; and the king rode hand in hand with her. Here was also my Lady Castlemaine riding amongst the rest of the ladies; but the king took, methought, no notice of her; nor when they light did anybody press (as she seemed to expect, and staid for it) to take her down, but was taken down by her own gentlemen. She looked mighty out of humour, and had a yellow plume in her hat (which all took notice of), and yet is very handsome. I followed them up into Whitehall, and into the queene’s presence, where all

the ladies walked, talking and fiddling with their hats and feathers, and changing and trying one another's by one another's heads, and laughing. But it was the finest sight to me, considering their great beautys and dress, that ever I did see in my life. But, above all, Mrs. Stuart in this dresse, with her hat cocked and a red plume, with her sweet eye, little Roman nose, and excellent taille, is now the greatest beauty I ever saw, I think, in my life; and, if ever woman can, do exceed my Lady Castlemaine, at least in this dresse: nor do I wonder if the king changes, which I verily believe is the reason of his coldness to my Lady Castlemaine.'

Having returned from the park, dined at noon, walked in the palace gardens, or played cards till evening came, their majesties, surrounded by a brilliant and joyous court, would in summer time descend the broad steps leading from Whitehall to the Thames, and embark upon the water for greater diversion. Never was there so goodly a sight, seldom so merry a company. The barges in which they sailed were draped to the water's edge with bright fabrics, hung with curtains of rich silk, and further adorned with

gay pennants. And, as the long procession of boats, filled with fair women and gallant men, followed their majesties adown the placid Thames towards pleasant Richmond, my Lord Arran would delight the ears of all by his performance on the guitar ; the fair Stuart would sing French songs in her sweet childlike voice ; or a concert of music would suddenly resound from the banks, being placed there to surprise by some ingenious courtier.

And presently landing on grassy meads, delightful to sight by freshness of their colour, and sweet to scent from odour of their herbs, the court would sup right heartily ; laugh, drink, and make love most merrily, until early shadows stole across the summer sky, and night-dews fell upon the thirsty earth. Then king, queen, and courtiers once more embarking, would sail slowly back, whilst the moon rose betimes in the heavens, and the barges streaked the waters with silver lines.

At other times magnificent entertainments filled the nights with light and revelry. Pepys tells us of a great ball he witnessed in the last month of the year 1662 at the palace of White-

hall. He was carried thither by Mr. Povy, a member of the Tangier Commission, and taken at first to the Duke of York's chambers, where his royal highness and the duchess were at supper; and from thence 'into a room where the ball was to be, crammed with fine ladies, the greatest of the court. By-and-by comes the king and queene, the duke and duchess, and all the great ones; and, after seating themselves, the king takes out the Duchess of York; and the duke the Duchess of Buckingham; the Duke of Monmouth my Lady Castlemaine; and so other lords other ladies; and they danced the bransle. After that, the king led a lady a single coranto; and then the rest of the lords, one after another, other ladies: very noble it was, and great pleasure to see. Then to country dances: the king leading the first. Of the ladies that danced, the Duke of Monmouth's lady, and my Lady Castlemaine, and a daughter of Sir Harry de Vicke's were the best. The manner was, when the king dances, all the ladies in the room, and his queene herself, stand up: and indeed he dances rarely, and much better than the Duke of York.'

Petit soupers were another form of entertainments, greatly enjoyed by Charles, and accordingly much in vogue with his courtiers. The Chevalier de Grammont had principally helped to make them fashionable, his suppers being served with the greatest elegance, attended by the choicest wits, and occasionally favoured with the presence of majesty itself. Nor were Lady Gerrard's *petits soupers* less brilliant, or her company less distinguished. Her ladyship boasted of French parentage, and understood the art of pleasing to perfection; and accordingly at her board wine flowed, wit sparkled, and love obtained in the happiest manner. Now it happened one of her delightful entertainments was destined to gain a notoriety she by no means coveted, and concerning which the French ambassador, Count de Comminges, wrote pleasantly enough to the Marquis de Lionne.

It came to pass that Lady Gerrard, who loved the queen, requested the honour of their majesties to sup with her. She, moreover, invited some of the courtiers, amongst whom she did not include my Lady Castlemaine. On the appointed night the king and queen duly arrived; the other

guests had already assembled ; and the hour gave fair promise of entertainment. But presently, when supper was announced, his majesty was missing, and on inquiry it was discovered he had left the house for Lady Castlemaine's lodgings, where he spent the evening. Such an insult as this so openly dealt the queen, and such an indignity put upon the hostess, caused the greatest agitation to all present ; and subsequently afforded subject for scandalous gossip to the town. It moreover showed that the monarch was yet an abject slave of his mistress, whose charms entangled him irresistibly. At least four times a week he supped with her, returning at early morning from her lodgings, in a stealthy way, through the privy gardens, a proceeding of which the sentries took much notice, joked unbecomingly, and gossiped freely.

Now in order to avoid further observation at such times, and silence rumours which consequently obtained, his majesty removed the countess from her lodgings in that part of the palace divided by the road leading to Westminster from the chief block, and furnished her with apartments next his own chamber. The

poor queen, who had sought by every means in her power to win his affection, was sorely grieved at this action, and moreover depressed by the neglect to which she was continually subjected. Sometimes four months were allowed to pass without his deigning to sup with her, though the whole court was aware he constantly paid that honour to her infamous rival. But knowing how unavailing reproach would be, she held her peace; and feeling how obtrusive her sorrow would seem, she hid her tears. Now and again, however, a look would flash in her eyes, and an answer rise to her lips, which showed how deeply she felt her bitter wrongs. 'I wonder your majesty has the patience to sit so long addressing,' said my Lady Castlemaine to her one morning when she found her yet in the dresser's hands. 'I have so much reason to use patience,' answered the neglected wife, 'that I can very well bear with it.'

And so the countess continued to reign paramount in his majesty's favour until the middle of July, 1663, when a rumour spread through the town that she had quarrelled with the king, and had consequently fallen from her high estate.

The cause of disagreement between the monarch and his mistress is narrated by the French ambassador in a letter to Louis XIV.

By this time the fair Stuart had so increased in his majesty's favour, that my Lady Castlemaine began to see the indiscretion of which she had been guilty in bringing her so constantly into his presence, and moreover to fear her influence over his fickle heart. Accordingly she refused to invite the maid of honour to her apartments, or entertain her at her assemblies. At this the king became exceedingly wrathful, and told my lady he would not enter her rooms again unless Miss Stuart was there. Thereon the charming countess flew into a violent passion, roundly abused his majesty, called her carriage, and protesting she would never again enter the palace of Whitehall, drove off in a rage to the residence of her uncle at Richmond. The monarch had not expected his words would cause such fury, nor did he desire her departure; and no sooner had she gone than he began to regret her absence and long for her return.

Therefore next morning he made pretence of hunting, and turning his horse's head in the

direction of Richmond, called on his mistress, when he apologized to and made friends with her. She therefore returned and exercised her old ascendancy over him once more. It is probable his majesty was the more anxious to pacify her, from the fact that she was now far advanced in her third pregnancy; for two months later she gave birth to her second son, who was baptized Henry Fitzroy, and subsequently created Duke of Grafton.

And it happened about this time, that the queen, falling ill, drew near unto death. On Friday, the 14th October, 1663, a fever took possession of her, when the doctors were summoned, her head shaven, and pigeons put to her feet. Her illness, however, rapidly increased, and believing she was about to leave a world in which her young life had known so much sorrow, she made her will, put her affairs in order, and received extreme unction. Upon this the king, mindful of grievous injuries he had done her, was sorely troubled in his heart, and going to her chamber, flung himself at the foot of her bed and burst into tears; as the French ambassador narrates.

It is said women love best men who treat them worst. If this be so, God alone who made them knows wherefore; for it is given no man to understand them in all. Now her majesty proved no exception to this rule regarding the unreasonableness of her sex in placing their affections most on those who regard them least; for she was devoted to the king. Therefore the evidence of his grief at prospect of her loss touched her deeper than all words can say, and with much sweetness she sought to soothe and console him.

She told him she had no desire to live, and no sorrow to die, save, indeed, that caused by parting from him. She hoped he would soon wed a consort more worthy of his love than she had been; one who would contribute more to his happiness and the satisfaction of the nation than she had. And now they were about to part, she had two requests to make: that he would never separate his interests from those of the king her brother, or cease to protect her distressed nation; and that her body might be sent back to Portugal and laid in the tomb of her ancestors. At this the king, yet on his

knees beside her, interrupted her only by his sobs, hearing which she wept likewise; and so overcome was he by grief that he was obliged to be led from her room.

The court was saddened by her majesty's illness, for she had won the goodwill of all by the kindness of her disposition and gentleness of her manner; the city was likewise afflicted, for the people thought so good a queen could not fail in time to reclaim even so erratic a husband; and trade became suddenly depressed. Crowds gathered by night and by day outside the palace to learn the most recent change in her majesty's condition: many thinking her death inevitable, because the doctors had pronounced her recovery impossible. And for days her soul hovered betwixt two worlds.

On the night of the 19th, a fierce storm raged over England; and Mr. Pepys, being waked by the roaring of mighty winds, turned to his wife and said: 'I pray God I hear not of the death of any great person, this wind is so high.' And fearing the queen might have departed, he rose betimes, and took coach to the palace that he might make inquiries concerning her,

but found her majesty was still living. She was now, however, unconscious ; and gave free voice to the secret sorrow which underlay her life, because she had not borne children to the king. Had she given him heirs, she felt assured he would certainly love her as well as he loved his mistresses ; and would feel as proud of her offspring as of those borne him by other women. But though she had proved capable of becoming a mother on more than one occasion, it pleased heaven to leave her childless, to her great grief. Therefore in her delirium, desires shaped themselves to realities, and she believed she had given birth to three children, two boys and a girl. The latter she fancied much resembled the king, but she was troubled that one of the boys was plain featured. And seeing her grief at this, his majesty, who stood by, sought in pity to console her, saying the boy was indeed pretty ; at which she brightened visibly, and answering him said : ‘ Nay, if it be like you, it is a fine boy indeed, and I would be very well pleased with it.’ This delusion continued through her illness, and so strongly did it force itself upon her mind, that one morning

when she was on her way to recovery, on waking suddenly and seeing the doctor bending over her, she exclaimed, 'How do the children?'

Now all this time, whilst the shadow of death lay upon the palace, and laughter and music were no longer heard within its walls, there was one of its inmates who pondered much upon the great fortune which the future might have in keeping for her. This was fair Frances Stuart, who, not having yielded to the king's request by becoming his mistress, now entertained high hopes of being made his wife. In this dream she was, moreover, flattered by an unusual deference and high respect paid her by the court since the beginning of her majesty's illness. The king continued his attentions to her; for though he had proved himself 'fondly disconsolate' and wept sorely for her majesty, he never during her sickness omitted an opportunity of conversing with Miss Stuart, or neglected supping with Lady Castlemaine. But the hopes entertained by the maid of honour were speedily overthrown, for contrary to all expectation the queen recovered, and was so well on the 10th November as to 'bespeak herself a new gowne.'

And so the court remained unchanged, and life went on as before ; the queen growing gradually stronger, the king making love to Miss Stuart by day, and visiting Lady Castlemaine by night. And it happened one evening when he went to sup with the latter there was a chine of beef to roast, and no fire to cook it because the Thames had flooded the kitchen. Hearing which, the countess called out to the cook, ‘ Zounds, you must set the house on fire, but it shall be roasted !’ And roasted it was.

CHAPTER X.

Notorious courtiers.—My Lord Rochester's satires.—Places a watch on certain ladies of quality.—His majesty becomes indignant.—Rochester retires to the country.—Dons a disguise and returns to town.—Practises astrology.—Two maids of honour seek adventure.—Mishaps which befell them.—Rochester forgiven.—The Duke of Buckingham.—Lady Shrewsbury and her victims.—Captain Howard's duel.—Lord Shrewsbury avenges his honour.—A strange story.—Colonel Blood attempts an abduction.—Endeavours to steal the regalia.—The king converses with him.

PROMINENT among the courtiers, and foremost amid the friends of his majesty, were two noblemen distinguished alike for their physical grace, exceeding wit, and notable eccentricity. These were the Earl of Rochester, and his Grace of Buckingham; gallants both, whose respective careers were so intimately connected with the court as to make further chronicle of them necessary in these pages.

My Lord Rochester, though younger in years than the duke, was superior to him in wit, comeliness, and attraction. Nor was there a more conspicuous figure observable in the palace of Whitehall than this same earl, who was ever foremost in pursuit of such pleasures as wine begets and love appeases. His mirth was the most buoyant, his conversation the most agreeable, his manner the most engaging in the world; whence he became 'the delight and wonder of men, the love and dotage of women.' A courtier possessed of so happy a disposition, and endowed with such brilliant talents, could not fail in pleasing the king; who vastly enjoyed his society, but was occasionally obliged to banish his person from the court, when his eccentric conduct rendered him intolerable, or his bitter satire aimed at royalty. For it was given no other man in his age to blend merry wit and caustic ridicule so happily together; therefore those who read his lines were forced to laugh at his fancy, though hurt by his irony.

Now in order to keep this talent in constant practice, he was wont to celebrate in inimitable verse such events, be they private or public, as happened at court, or befell the courtiers; and

inasmuch as his subjects were frequently of a licentious nature, his lines were generally of a scandalous character. He therefore became the public censor of court folly; and so unerringly did his barbed shafts hit the weaknesses at which they were aimed, that his productions were equally the terror of those he victimized, and the delight of those he spared.

This liberal use of his satire he was wont to excuse on the plea that there were some who could not be kept in order, or admonished, by any other means. Therefore, having the virtue of his friends so keenly at heart, an ingenious plan occurred to him by which he might secretly discover their vices, and publicly reprove them. And in order that he might fulfil this purpose to his greater satisfaction, he promptly sought and found a footman, who, by virtue of his employment, was well acquainted with the courtiers. This man the 'noble and beautiful earl' furnished with a red coat and a musket, that he might pass as a sentinel, and then placed him every night throughout one winter at the doors of certain ladies of quality whom he suspected of carrying on intrigues.

In this disguise the footman readily passed as a soldier stationed at his post by command of his officer, and was thus enabled to note what gentlemen called on the suspected ladies at unreasonable but not unfashionable hours. Accordingly, my lord made many surprising discoveries, and when he had gained sufficient information on such delicate points, he quietly retired into the country, that he might with greater ease devote himself to the composition of those lively verses which he subsequently circulated through the court, to the wonder and dismay of many, and the delight and profit of few.

To these lampoons no name was attached, and my lord took precautions that their authorship should not be satisfactorily proved, no matter how sagely suspected. Moreover, in his conversation he was judicious enough to keep the weapon of his satire in reserve; sheathing its fatal keenness in a bewitching softness of civility until occasion required its use; when forth it flashed all the brighter for its covering, all the sharper for its rest. And satire being absent from his speech, humour ever waited on his words; and never was he more extravagantly

gay than when assisting at the pleasant suppers given by the merry monarch to his choicest friends.

Here, whilst drinking deep of ruddy wine from goblets of old gold, he narrated some of his strange experiences, and illustrated them with flashes of his wit. For it was the habit of this eccentric earl, when refinements of the court began to pall upon him, or his absence from Whitehall became a necessity, to seek fresh adventure and intrigue disguised as a porter, a beggar, or a ballad-monger. And so carefully did he hide his identity in the character he assumed, that his most intimate friends failed to recognise him.

No doubt the follies in which he indulged were in some measure due to the eccentricity ever attendant upon genius; but they were probably likewise occasioned by craving for excitement begotten of drink. For my lord loved wine exceedingly; and when he drew near unto death in the dawn of his manhood, confessed to Bishop Burnet that for five years he was continually drunk: 'Not that he was all the while under the visible effects of it, but his blood

was so inflamed, that he was not in all that time cool enough to be perfectly master of himself.' Charles delighted in the society of this gay courtier, because of his erratic adventures, and his love of wine. Moreover, the licentious verses which it was the earl's good pleasure to compose, the names of some of which no decent lips would whisper in this age of happy innocence, afforded the monarch extravagant enjoyment. Withal his majesty's satisfaction in Lord Rochester's wit was not always to be counted upon, as it proved. For it came to pass one night at the close of a royal supper, during which the earl had drunk deep, that with great goodwill to afford the king diversion, he handed his majesty what he believed was a satire on a courtier, more remarkable for its humour than its decency. Whereon Charles, with anticipation of much delight, opened the folded page, when he was surprised to see, not a copy of verses, but an unflattering description of himself, which ran as follows :

' Here lies our mutton-eating king,
Whose word no man relies on ;
Who never said a foolish thing,
And never did a wise one.'

Now the king, though the best tempered of men and most lenient of masters, was naturally wrathful at this verbal character: the more so because recognising its faithfulness at a glance. He therefore upbraided Rochester with ingratitude, and banished him from the court.

Nothing dismayed, my lord retired into the country; but in a short time, growing weary of pastoral solitude which gave him an appetite for adventure it could not wholly supply, he returned privately to town, and assuming a disguise, took up his residence in the city. Here exercising his characteristic tact, and great capacity for pleasing, he speedily made friends with wealthy merchants and worthy aldermen, who subsequently invited him to their hospitable tables, and introduced him to their gracious ladies.

And as his conversation had not failed to delight the husbands, neither were his charms unsuccessful in affording satisfaction to their wives. To the one he railed against the impotence of the king's ministers, to the other he declaimed upon the wickedness of his majesty's mistresses; and to both his denunciations were

equally sincere and acceptable. But his bitterest words were reserved for such courtiers as Rochester, Buckingham, and Killigrew, whose dissipated lives were the scandal of all honest men, the terror of all virtuous women: insolent fellows, moreover, who had the impudence to boast that city ladies were not so faithful to their husbands as was generally supposed, and, moreover, the boldness to assert that they painted. Indeed, he marvelled much, that since such men were frequenters of Whitehall, sacred fire from heaven had not long since descended and consumed the royal palace to ashes. Such virtuous sentiments as these, expressed by so gallant a man, made him acceptable in many homes: and the result was he speedily became surfeited by banquets, suppers, and other hospitalities, to which the excellent but credulous citizens bade him heartily welcome.

He therefore disappeared from their midst one day as suddenly and unaccountably as he had come amongst them. He did not, however, take himself afar, but donning a new disguise, retreated to a more distant part of the city: for an

idea had occurred to him which he determined speedily to put in practice. This was to assume the character and bearing of a sage astrologer and learned physician, at once capable of reading the past, and laying bare the future of all who consulted him; also of healing diseases of and preventing mishaps to such as visited him. Accordingly, having taken lodgings in Tower Street, at a goldsmith's house, situated next the Black Swan, he prepared himself for practice, adopted the title of doctor, the name of Alexander Bendo, and issued bills headed by the royal arms, containing the most remarkable and impudent manifesto perhaps ever set forth by any impostor.

Copies of this may yet be seen in early editions of his works. It was addressed to all gentlemen, ladies, and others, whether of the city, town, or country, to whom Alexander Bendo wished health and prosperity. He had come amongst them because the great metropolis of England had ever been infested by numerous quacks, whose arrogant confidence, backed by their ignorance, had enabled them to impose on the public; either by premeditated

cheats in physic, chymical and galenic, in astrology, physiognomy, palmistry, mathematics, alchemy, and even government itself. Of which latter he did not propose to discourse, or meddle with, since it in no way belonged to his trade or vocation, which he thanked God he found much more safe, equally honest, and more profitable. But he, Alexander Bendo, had with unswerving faithfulness and untiring assiduity for years courted the arts and sciences, and had learned dark secrets and received signal favours from them. He was therefore prepared to take part against unlearned wretches, and arrant quacks, whose impudent addresses and saucy pretences had brought scandal upon sage and learned men.

However, in a wicked world like this, where virtue was so exactly counterfeited, and hypocrisy was generally successful, it would be hard for him, a stranger, to escape censure. But indeed he would submit to be considered a mountebank if he were discovered to be one. Having made which statement, he proceeded to draw an ingenious comparison between a mountebank and a politician, suitable to all ages and climes, but

especially to this century and country. Both, he intimated, are fain to supply the lack of higher abilities to which they pretend, with craft; and attract attention by undertaking strange things which can never be performed. By both the people are pleased and deluded; the expectation of good in the future drawing their eyes from the certainty of evil in the present.

The sage Alexander Bendo then discoursed of miraculous cures which he could effect, but he would set down no word in his bill which bore an unclean sound. It was enough that he made himself understood, but indeed he had seen physicians' bills containing things of which no man who walked warily before God could approve. Concerning astrological predictions, physiognomy, divination by dreams, and otherwise, he would say, if it did not look like ostentation, he had seldom failed, but had often been of service; and to those who came to him he would guarantee satisfaction. Nor would he be ashamed to avow his willingness to practise rare secrets, for the help, conservation, and augmentation of beauty and comeliness; an endowment granted for the better establishment of

mutual love between man and woman, and as such highly valuable to both. The knowledge of secrets like this he had gathered during journeys through France and Italy, in which countries he had spent his life since he was fifteen years old. Those who had travelled in the latter country knew what a miracle art there performs in behalf of beauty ; how women of forty bear the same countenance as those of fifteen, ages being in no way distinguished by appearances ; whereas in England, by looking at a horse in the mouth and a woman in the face, it was possible to tell the number of their years. He could, therefore, give such remedies as would render those who came to him perfectly fair ; clearing and preserving them from all spots, freckles, pimples, marks of smallpox, or traces of accidents. He would, moreover, cure the teeth, clear the breath, take away fatness, and add flesh.

A man who vouched to perform such wonders was not long without patients. At first these were drawn from his immediate neighbourhood, but soon his fame reached the heart of the city. Accordingly, many ladies of whose hospitality he had partaken, and of whose secrets he had

become possessed, hurried to consult him ; and the marvellous insight he betrayed regarding their past, and strange predictions he pronounced concerning their future, filled them with amazement, and occasionally with alarm. And they, proclaiming the marvels of his wisdom, widened the circle of his reputation, until his name was spoken within the precincts of Whitehall.

Curiosity concerning so remarkable a man at once beset the minds of certain ladies at court, who either feared or expected much from the future, and were anxious to peer into such secrets as it held concerning themselves. But dreading the notoriety their presence would naturally cause in the vicinity of Tower Street, a spot to them unknown, they, acting with a prudence not invariably characteristic of their conduct, sent their maids to ascertain from personal experience if the astrologer's wisdom was in truth as marvellous as reported. Now, when these appeared in fear and trembling before the great Alexander Bendo, the knowledge he revealed concerning themselves, and their mistresses likewise, was so wonderful that it ex-

ceeded all expectation. Accordingly the maids returned to court with such testimonies concerning the lore of this star-reader, as fired afresh their mistresses' desires to see and converse with him in their proper persons.

It therefore came to pass that Miss Price and Miss Jennings, maids of honour both—the one to the queen, the other to the Duchess of York—boldly resolved to visit Doctor Bendo, and learn what the future held for them. Miss Price was a lady who delighted in adventure; Miss Jennings was a gentlewoman of spirit; both looked forward to their visit with excitement and interest. It happened one night, when the court had gone to the playhouse, these ladies, who had excused themselves from attending the queen and the duchess, dressed as orange girls, and taking baskets of fruit under their arms, quickly crossed the park, and entered a hackney-coach at Whitehall Gate. Bidding the driver convey them to Tower Street, they rattled merrily enough over the uneven streets until they came close to the theatre, when, being in high spirits and feeling anxious to test the value of their disguise,

they resolved to alight from their conveyance, enter the playhouse, and offer their wares for sale in presence of the court.

Accordingly, paying the driver, they descended from the coach, and running between the lines of chairs gathered round the theatre, gained the door. Now, who should arrive at that moment but the beau Sidney, attired in the bravery of waving feathers, fluttering ribbons, and rich-hued velvets. And as he paused to adjust his curls to his greater satisfaction before entering the playhouse, Miss Price went boldly forward and asked him to buy her fine oranges ; but so engaged was he in his occupation, that he did not deign to make reply, but passed into the theatre without turning his glance upon her. Miss Jennings, however, fared somewhat differently, and with less satisfaction to herself ; for, perceiving another courtier, none other than Tom Killigrew, a rare wit and lover of pleasure, she went up to him and offered her fruit for sale. These he declined to buy ; but chucking her under the chin, and glancing at her with an air of familiarity, invited her to bring her oranges to his lodgings next morning.

On this Miss Jennings, who was as virtuous as lovely, pushed him away with violence, and forgetting the character she assumed, commenced rebuking his insolence, much to the amusement and surprise of the bystanders. Fearing detection of their identity, Miss Price pulled her forcibly away from the crowd.

Miss Jennings was after this incident anxious to forego her visit to the astrologer, and return to Whitehall, but her companion declaring this would be a shameful want of spirit, they once more entered a hackney coach, and requested they might be driven to the lodgings of the learned Doctor Bendo. Their adventures for the evening were unfortunately not yet at an end; for just as they entered Tower Street they saw Henry Brinker, one of the gentlemen of the bedchamber to the Duke of York. Now it happened this courtier had been dining with a citizen of worth and wealth, whose house he was about to leave the moment the maids of honour drove by. They, knowing him to be a man remarkable for his gallantries, were anxious to avoid his observation, and therefore directed the driver to proceed a few doors

beyond their destination; but he, having caught sight of two pretty orange wenches, followed the coach, and promptly stepping up as they alighted, made some bold observations to them. On this both turned away their heads that they might avoid his gaze, a proceeding which caused him to observe them with closer scrutiny, when he immediately recognised them, without however intimating his knowledge. He therefore fell to teasing them, and finally left them with no very pleasant remarks ringing in their ears, concerning the virtue which obtained among maids of honour, for he did not doubt their disguise was assumed for purposes of intrigue.

Overwhelmed with confusion, they walked towards the goldsmith's shop, over which the oracle delivered wisdom; but being no longer in a humour to heed his words, they presently resolved on driving back to Whitehall with all possible speed. But alas! on turning round they beheld their driver waging war with a crowd which had gathered about his vehicle; for having left their oranges in the coach, some boys had essayed to help themselves, whereon the man fell foul of them. But he, being one

against many, was like to fare badly at their hands ; seeing which, the maids of honour persuaded him to let the crowd take the fruit and drive them back at once. This conduct had not the effect of appeasing those who profited by its generosity ; for the gentlewomen were greeted with most foul abuse, and many unworthy charges were laid to their account in language more vigorous than polished. And having at last arrived in safety at Whitehall, they resolved never to sally forth in search of adventure again.

After various strange experiences in his character as doctor of medicine and teller of fortunes, of the weakness of human nature and strength of common credulity, the learned Alexander Bendo vanished from the city ; and about the same time the gallant Earl of Rochester appeared at court, where he sought for and obtained the merry monarch's pardon. The wonderful stories he was enabled to relate, piquant in detail, and sparkling with wit, rendered him delightful to the king, in whose favour he soon regained his former supremacy. Nay, Charles even determined to enrich and re-

ward him, not indeed from the resources of his privy purse, his majesty's income being all too little for his mistresses' rapacity, but by uniting him to a charming woman and an heiress.

The lady whom his majesty selected for this purpose was Elizabeth Mallett, daughter of a Somersetshire squire, and granddaughter of Lord Hawley of Donamore. Now this gentlewoman had a fortune of two thousand five hundred a year, a considerable sum in those days, and one which gained her many suitors; amongst whom Lord Hinchbrook was commended by her family, and Lord Rochester by the king. Now the latter nobleman, having but a poor estate, was anxious to obtain her wealth, and fearful of losing his suit: and being uncertain as to whether he could gain her consent to marry him by fair means, he resolved to obtain it by execution of a daring scheme.

This was to carry her off by force, an action which highly commended itself to his adventurous spirit. Accordingly he selected a night on which the heiress supped at Whitehall with her friend Miss Stuart, for conducting his enterprise. It therefore happened that as

Elizabeth Mallett was returning home from the palace in company with her grandfather, their coach was suddenly stopped at Charing Cross. Apprehending some danger, Lord Hawley looked out, and by the red light of a score of torches flashing through darkness, saw he was surrounded by a band of armed men, both afoot and on horse. Their action was prompt and decisive, for before either my lord or his granddaughter was aware of their intention, the latter was seized, forcibly lifted from the coach, and transferred to another which awaited close at hand. This was driven by six horses, and occupied by two women, who received the heiress with all possible respect. No sooner had she been placed in the coach than the horses were set to a gallop, and away she sped, surrounded by a company of horsemen.

Lord Hawley was cast into the uttermost grief and passion by this outrage; but his condition did not prevent him speedily gathering a number of friends and retainers, in company with whom he gave chase to those who had abducted his granddaughter; and so fast did they ride that Mistress Mallett was over-

taken at Uxbridge, and carried back in safety to town. For this outrageous attempt, my Lord Rochester was by the king's command committed to the Tower, there to await his majesty's good pleasure. It seemed now as if the earl's chance of gaining the heiress had passed away for ever; inasmuch as Charles regarded the attempted abduction with vast displeasure, and my Lord Hawley with terrible indignation.

But the ways of women being inexplicable, it happened in a brief while Mistress Mallett was inclined to regret my Lord Rochester's imprisonment, and therefore moved to have him released; and, moreover, she was subsequently pleased to regard his suit and accept him as her wedded lord. It speaks favourably for his character that with all his faults she loved him well; nor did Rochester, though occasionally unfaithful, ever treat her with unkindness. At times the old spirit of restlessness and passion for adventure would master him, when he would withdraw himself from her society for weeks and months. But she, though sadly afflicted by such conduct, did not resent it. 'If I could have been troubled at anything,

when I had the happiness of receiving a letter from you,' she writes to him on one occasion when he had absented himself from her for long, 'I should be so because you did not name a time when I might hope to see you, the uncertainty of which very much afflicts me.' And again the poor patient wife tells him, 'Lay your commands upon me, what I am to do, and though it be to forget my children, and the long hope I have lived in of seeing you, yet I will endeavour to obey you; or in memory only torment myself, without giving you the trouble of putting you in mind that there lives such a creature as your faithful humble servant.' At length dissipation undermined his naturally strong constitution; and for months this once most gay and gallant man, this 'noble and beautiful earl,' lay dying of that cruel disease consumption. The while such thoughts as come to those who reason of life's vanities beset him; and as he descended into the valley of shadows, the folly of this world's ways was made clear to him. And repenting of his sins, he died in peace with God and man at the age of three-and-thirty.

George Villiers, second Duke of Buckingham,

was not less notable than my Lord Rochester. By turns he played such diverse parts in life's strange comedy as that of a spendthrift and a miser, a profligate and a philosopher, a statesman who sought the ruin of his country, and a courtier who pandered to the pleasures of his king. But inasmuch as this history is concerned with the social rather than the political life of those mentioned in its pages, place must be given to such adventures as were connected with the court and courtiers. Buckingham's were chiefly concerned with his intrigues, which, alas! were many and strange; for though his wife was loving and virtuous, she was likewise lean and brown, and wholly incapable of controlling his erring fancies. Perhaps it was knowledge of her lack of comeliness which helped her to bear the burden of his follies; for according to Madame Dunois, though the duchess knew he was continually engaged in amours, she, by virtue of a patience uncommon to her sex, forbore mentioning the subject to him, and 'had complaisance enough to entertain his mistresses, and even lodge them in her house, all which she suffered because she loved him.'

The most remarkable of his intrigues was that which connected his name with the Countess of Shrewsbury. Her ladyship was daughter of the second Earl of Cardigan, and wife of the eleventh Earl of Shrewsbury. She was married a year previous to the restoration, and upon the establishment of the court at Whitehall had become one of its most distinguished beauties. Nor was she less famed for the loveliness of her person than for the generosity of her disposition ; inasmuch as none who professed themselves desirous of her affection were ever allowed to languish in despair. She therefore had many admirers, some of whom were destined to suffer for the distinction her friendship conferred.

Now one of the first to gain her attachment was the young Earl of Arran, the grace of whose bearing and ardour of whose character were alike notable to the court. The verses he sung her to an accompaniment of his guitar, and the glances he gave her indicative of his passion, might have melted a heart less cold than hers. Accordingly they gained him a friendship which, by reason of her vast benevolence, many were subsequently destined to share. Now it chanced that the

little Jermyn, who had already succeeded in winning the affections of such notable women as the poor Princess of Orange and my Lady Castlemaine, and had besides conducted a series of minor intrigues with various ladies connected with the court, was somewhat piqued that Lady Shrewsbury had accepted my Lord Arran's attentions without encouraging his. For Henry Jermyn, by virtue of the fascinations he exercised and the consequent reputation he enjoyed, expected to be wooed by such women as desired his love.

But when, later on, Lord Arran's devotion to the lady was succeeded by that of Thomas Howard, brother to the Earl of Carlisle, and captain of the guards, Jermyn was thoroughly incensed, and resolved to make an exception in favour of the countess by beginning those civilities which act as preludes to intrigue. My lady, who was not judicious enough to be off with the old love before she was on with the new, accepted Jermyn's advances with an eagerness that gave promise of further favours. This was highly displeasing to Howard, a brave and generous man, who under an exterior of passive

calmness concealed a spirit of fearless courage. Though not desirous of picking a quarrel with his rival, he was unwilling to suffer his impertinent interference. Jermyn, on the other hand, not being aware of Howard's real character, sought an early opportunity of insulting him. Such being their dispositions, a quarrel speedily ensued, which happened in this manner.

One fair summer day Captain Howard gave an entertainment at Spring Gardens, in honour of the countess. These gardens were situated close by Charing Cross, and opened into the spacious walks of St. James's Park. Bounded on one side by a grove, and containing leafy arbours and numerous thickets, the gardens were 'contrived to all the advantages of gallantry.' The scene of many an intrigue, they were constantly frequented by denizens of the court and dwellers in the city, to whom they afforded recreation and pleasure. In the centre of these fair gardens stood a cabaret, or house of entertainment, where repasts were served at exceeding high prices, and much good wine was drunk. Here it was Captain Howard received my Lady Shrewsbury and a goodly

company, spread a delicate banquet for them, and for their better diversion provided some excellent music played upon the bagpipes, by a soldier noted for his execution on that instrument.

Jermyn hearing of the great preparations Captain Howard made, resolved to be present on the occasion; and accordingly, before the hour appointed for dinner, betook himself to the garden, and as if he had arrived there by accident, strolled leisurely down the broad pleasant paths, bordered by pinks and fragrant roses clustering in the hedgerows. And presently drawing nigh the cabaret, he tarried there until the countess, rich in physical graces, with sunny smiles upon her lips, and amorous light in her eyes, stepped forth upon the balcony and greeted him. Whereon his heart took fire: and entering the house, he joined her where she stood, and held pleasant converse with her. Inflated by his success, he resolved on making himself disagreeable to the host, and therefore ventured to criticize the entertainment, and ridicule the music, which he voted barbarous to civilized ears. And to such extent did he

outrage Thomas Howard, that the, gallant captain, being more of a soldier than a courtier, and therefore preferring passages at arms to those of wit, could scarce refrain from drawing his sword and demanding the satisfaction due to him.

However, he subdued his wrath till the day was spent, and early next morning sent a challenge to his rival. Accordingly they met with fierce intent, and the duel which followed ended almost fatally for Jermyn, who was carried from the scene of encounter bleeding from three wounds caused by his antagonist's sword.

The unfortunate issue of this fight deprived Lady Shrewsbury of two lovers; for Howard, having rendered Jermyn unable to perform the part of a gallant, was obliged to fly from the country and remain abroad some time.

In their stead the countess sought consolation in the companionship of Thomas Killigrew, a handsome man and a notable courtier. She therefore had no regrets for the past: and he was entirely happy in the present, so that he boasted of his felicities to all acquaint-

ance, in general, and to his friend the Duke of Buckingham in particular. It was Killigrew's constant habit to sup with his grace, on which occasions his conversation invariably turned on her ladyship, when, his imagination being heated by wine, he freely endowed her with the perfections of a goddess. To such descriptions the duke could not listen unmoved; and therefore resolved to judge for himself if indeed the countess was such a model of loveliness as Killigrew represented. Accordingly, at the first opportunity which presented itself, the duke made love to her, and she, nothing averse to his attentions, encouraged his affections. Killigrew was much aggrieved at this unexpected turn of affairs, and bitterly reproached the countess; but she, being mistress of the situation, boldly denied all knowledge of him.

This was more than he expected or could endure, and he consequently abused her roundly in all companies, characterizing the charms of which he once boasted as faults he could not endure; ridiculing her airs, and denouncing her conduct. Reports of his comments and discourses speedily reached Lady Shrewsbury's ears; and

he was privately warned that if he did not desist means would be taken to silence him effectually. Not being wise enough to accept this hint, he continued to vilify her. The result was, one night when returning from the Duke of York's apartments he was suddenly waylaid in St. James's Park, and three passes of a sword made at him through his chair, one of which pierced his arm. Not doubting they had despatched him to a better world, his assailants made their escape; and my Lady Shrewsbury, who singularly enough happened to be passing at the time in her coach, and had stopped to witness the proceedings, drove off as speedily as six horses could carry her.

Knowing it would be impossible to trace the villainy which had prompted this deed to its source, Killigrew said not a word concerning the murderous attempt, and henceforth held his peace regarding his late mistress's imperfections. For some time she continued her intrigue with the Duke of Buckingham without interference. But in an evil hour it happened the Earl of Shrewsbury, who had long entertained a philosophical indifference towards her previous

amours, now undertook to defend his honour, which it was clear his Grace of Buckingham had sadly injured.

Accordingly he challenged the duke to combat, and in due time they met face to face in a field by Barnes Elms. His grace had as seconds Sir Robert Holmes and Captain William Jenkins; the earl being supported by Sir John Talbot and Bernard Howard, son of my Lord Arundel. The fight was brief and bloody; Lord Shrewsbury, being run through the body, was carried from the field in an insensible condition. The duke received but a slight wound, but his friend Captain Jenkins was killed upon the spot. The while swords clashed, blood flowed, and lives hung in a balance, the woman who wrought this evil stood close by, disguised as a page, holding the bridle of her lover's horse, as Lord Orford mentions.

In consequence of this duel the Duke of Buckingham absented himself from the capital; but two months after its occurrence King Charles was pleased, 'in contemplation of the services heretofore done to his majesty by most of the persons engaged in the late duel or

rencontre, to graciously pardon the said offence.' Three months after the day on which he fought, Lord Shrewsbury died from effects of his wounds, when the duke boldly carried the widow to his home. The poor duchess, who had patiently borne many wrongs, could not stand this grievous and public insult, and declared she would not live under the same roof with so shameless a woman. 'So I thought, madam,' rejoined her profligate lord, 'and have therefore ordered your coach to convey you to your father.'

The countess continued to live with her paramour; nor was the court scandalized. The queen, it is true, openly espoused the cause of the outraged duchess, and sought to enlist sympathy on her behalf; but so low was the tone of public morality that her words were unheeded, and no voice was raised in protest against this glaring infamy. Nay, the duke went further still in his efforts towards injuring the wife to whom he owed so much, and who loved him over-well; as he caused his chaplain, the Rev. Thomas Sprat, to marry him to my Lady Shrewsbury; and subsequently conferred on the son to which she gave birth, and for whom the

king stood godfather, his second title of Earl of Coventry. His wife was henceforth styled by the courtiers Dowager Duchess of Buckingham. It is worthy of mention that the Rev. Thomas Sprat in good time became Bishop of Rochester; and, it is written, 'an ornament to the church among those of the highest order.'

One of the most extraordinary characters which figured in this reign was Thomas Blood, sometimes styled colonel. He was remarkable for his great strength, high courage, and love of adventure. The son of an Irish blacksmith, he had, on the outbreak of civil warfare in his native country, joined Cromwell's army; and for the bravery he evinced was raised to the rank of lieutenant, rewarded by a substantial grant of land, and finally made a justice of the peace. At the restoration he was deprived of this honour, as he was likewise of the property he called his, which was returned to its rightful owner, an honest royalist. Wholly dissatisfied with a government which dealt him such hardships, he organized a plot to raise an insurrection in Ireland, storm Dublin Castle, and seize the Duke of Ormond, then lord lieutenant. This

dark scheme was discovered by his grace ; the chief conspirators were accordingly seized, with the exception of Blood, who succeeded in making his escape to Holland. His fellow traitors were tried and duly executed.

From Holland, Blood journeyed into England, where, becoming acquainted with some republicans, he entered into projects with them calculated to disturb the nation's peace ; which fact becoming known, he was obliged to seek refuge in Scotland. Here he found fresh employment for his restless energies, and in the year 1666 succeeded in stirring up some malcontents to rebellion. The revolt being quelled, he escaped to Ireland ; and after a short stay in that country returned once more to England, where he sought security in disguise.

He lived here in peace until 1670, when he made an attempt no less remarkable for its ingenuity than notable for its villainy. Towards the end of that year the Prince of Orange, being in London, was invited by the lord mayor to a civic banquet. Thither the Duke of Ormond attended him, and subsequently accompanied him to St. James's, where the prince then stayed.

A short distance from the palace gates stood Clarendon House, where the duke then resided, and towards which he immediately drove, on taking leave of his royal highness. Scarce had he proceeded a dozen yards up St. James's Street, when his coach was suddenly stopped by a band of armed and mounted men, who, hurriedly surrounding his grace, dragged him from the carriage and mounted him on a horse behind a stalwart rider. Word of command being then given, the gang started at a brisk pace down Piccadilly. Prompted by enemies of the duke, as well as urged by his own desires to avenge his loss of property and the death of his fellow-conspirators, Blood resolved to hang him upon the gallows at Tyburn. That he might accomplish this end with greater speed and security, he, leaving his victim securely buckled and tied to the fellow behind whom he had been mounted, galloped forward in advance to adjust a rope to the gallows, and make other necessary preparations.

No sooner did the echo of his horse's hoofs die away, than the duke, recovering the stupor this sudden attack had caused, became

aware that now was his opportunity to effect escape, if, indeed, such were possible. He to whom his grace was secured was a burly man possessed of great strength; the which Lord Ormond, being now past his sixtieth year, had not. However, life was dear to him, and therefore he began struggling with the fellow; and finally getting his foot under the villain's, he unhorsed him, when both fell heavily to the ground. Meanwhile his grace's coach having driven to Clarendon House, the footmen had given an account of the daring manner in which his abduction had been effected. On this an alarm was immediately raised, and the porter, servants, and others hastened down Piccadilly in search of their master, fast as good horses could carry them.

They had proceeded as far as the village of Knightsbridge, when reports of muskets, cries for help, and sounds of a scuffle they could not see for darkness, fell upon their ears, and filled them with alarm. The whole neighbourhood seemed startled, lights flashed, dogs barked, and many persons rushed towards the scene of encounter. Aware of this, the miscreants who

had carried off the duke discharged their pistols at him, and leaving him, as they supposed, for dead, fled to avoid capture, and were seen or heard of no more. His grace was carried in an insensible condition to a neighbouring house, but not having received serious hurt, recovered in a few days. The court and town were strangely alarmed by this outrage; nor as time passed was there any clue obtained to its perpetrators, though the king offered a thousand pounds reward for their discovery.

The duke and his family, however, had little doubt his grace of Buckingham was instigator of the deed; and Lord Ossory was resolved the latter should be made aware of their conviction. Therefore, entering the royal drawing-room one day, he saw the duke standing beside his majesty, and going forward addressed him. 'My lord,' said he in a bold tone, whilst he looked him full in the face, 'I know well that you are at the bottom of this late attempt upon my father; and I give you fair warning: if my father comes to a violent end by sword or pistol, or if he dies by the hand of a ruffian, or by the more secret way of poison, I shall not be at a

loss to know the first author of it: I shall consider you as the assassin; I shall treat you as such; and wherever I meet you I shall pistol you, though you stood behind the king's chair; and I tell you it in his majesty's presence, that you may be sure I shall keep my word.' No further attempt was made upon the Duke of Ormond's life.

Scarce six months elapsed from date of the essayed abduction, before Blood endeavoured to steal the regalia and royal jewels preserved in the Tower. The courage which prompted the design is not more remarkable than the skill which sought to effect it; both were worthy a man of genius. In the month of April, 1671, Blood, attired in the cassock, cloak, and canonical girdle of a clergyman, together with a lady, whom he represented as his wife, visited the Tower on purpose to see the crown. With their desire Mr. Edwards, the keeper, an elderly man and a worthy, readily complied. It chanced they were no sooner in the room where the regalia was kept, than the lady found herself taken suddenly and unaccountably ill, and indeed feared she must die; before bidding adieu to

life, she begged for a little whisky. This was promptly brought her, and Mrs. Edwards, who now appeared upon the scene, invited the poor gentlewoman to rest upon her bed. Whilst she complied with this kind request, the clergyman and Edwards had time to improve their acquaintance, which indeed bade fair towards speedily ripening into friendship.

And presently the lady recovering, she and her spouse took their leave with many expressions of gratitude and respect. Four days later, the good parson called on Mrs. Edwards, in order to present her with four pairs of fine new gloves, which she was pleased to receive. This gracious act paved the way to further friendship, which at last found its climax in a proposal of marriage made by the parson on behalf of his nephew, for the hand of young Mistress Edwards. 'You have a pretty gentlewoman for your daughter,' said the clergyman, 'and I have a young nephew, who has two or three hundred pounds a year in land, and is at my disposal; if your daughter be free, and you approve of it, I will bring him hither to see her, and we will endeavour to make a match of it.'

To this project Edwards readily consented, and invited the clergyman and the young man to spend a day with him, when they could discourse on the subject with greater leisure and more satisfaction. This was cordially agreed to by the parson, who, with the bridegroom elect and two of his friends, presented themselves on the appointed date, as early as seven of the clock in the morning. Edwards was up betimes; but the good clergyman, apologizing for the untimely hour of their arrival, which he attributed to his nephew's eagerness for sight of his mistress, declared he would not enter the keeper's apartments until Mrs. Edwards was ready to receive them. However, in order to pass the time, he begged his host might show the jewels to their young friends.

With this petition Edwards complied readily enough. One of the men, protesting he did not care to see the treasures, waited at the door; the other three entered with the keeper, who was no sooner inside the room than a cloak was thrown over his head, a gag, constructed of wood with a hole in it by which he might breathe, clapped into his mouth, and the more effectually to pre-

vent him making a noise, an iron ring was fastened to his nose. He was told if he attempted an alarm he would be instantly killed, but if he remained quiet his life should be spared. Blood and his two accomplices then seized upon the crown, orb, and sceptre, seeing which, Edwards made as much noise as he possibly could by stamping on the floor, whereon the robbers struck him with a mallet on the head, stabbed him with a short sword in the side, and left him, as they thought, for dead. Blood then secured the regalia under his cloak, one of his companions put the orb into his breeches pocket, whilst the other proceeded to file the sceptre that it might be more conveniently carried.

Now, at this moment it happened the keeper's son, who had been absent in Flanders, returned to his father's home. He who stood sentinel asked him with whom he would speak, whereon young Edwards said he belonged to the house, and so passed to the apartments where his family resided. The other giving notice of his arrival, the robbers hastened to depart, leaving the sceptre behind them. No sooner had they gone, than the old man struggled to his feet,

dragged the gag from his mouth, and cried out in fright: 'Treason—murder—murder—treason!' On this his daughter rushed down, and seeing the condition of her father, and noting the absence of the regalia, continued his cry, adding, 'The crown is stolen—thieves—thieves!'

Young Edwards and another who heard her, Captain Beckman, now gave pursuit to the robbers, who had already got beyond the main guard. Word was instantly shouted to the warder of the drawbridge to stop the villains, but Blood was equal to this emergency; coolly advancing, he discharged his pistol at the man, who instantly fell. The thieves then crossed the bridge, passed through the outward gate, and made for the street close by, where their horses awaited them, crying the while, 'Stop thief! stop thief!' Before they advanced far, Captain Beckman came up with Blood, who, turning quickly round, fired his second pistol at the head of his pursuer; but Beckman, suddenly stooping, escaped injury, and sprang at the throat of his intended assassin. A struggle then ensued. Blood was a man of powerful physique,

but Beckman was lithe and vigorous, and succeeded in holding the rogue until help arrived. In the contest, the regalia fell to the ground, when a fair diamond and a priceless pearl were lost; they were, however, eventually recovered. The other thieves were likewise captured, and all of them secured in the Tower.

Certain death now faced Blood; but the wonderful luck which had befriended him during life did not desert him now. At this time the Duke of Buckingham was high in favour with the king, and desirous of saving one who had secretly served him; or fearing exposure if Blood made a full confession, his grace impressed Charles with a desire to see the man who had perpetrated so daring a deed, saying he must be one possessed of extraordinary spirit. Giving ready ear to his words, the monarch consented to have an interview with the robber, for which purpose he gave orders Blood should be brought to Whitehall.

Those who heard of the king's resolution felt satisfied Blood need not despair of life; 'for surely,' said Sir Robert Southwell, on becoming aware of his majesty's design, 'no king should wish to see a malefactor but with inten-

tions to pardon him.' Now Blood, being a man of genius, resolved to play his part during the audience in a manner which would favourably impress the king. Therefore when Charles asked him how he had dared attempt so bold a robbery, Blood made answer he had lost a fine property by the crown, and was resolved to recover it with the crown. Diverted by his audacity his majesty questioned him further, when Blood confessed to his attempted abduction of the Duke of Ormond, but refused to name his accomplices. Nay, he narrated various other adventures, showing them in a romantic light; and finally concluded by telling the king he had once entered into a design to take his sacred life by rushing upon him with a carbine from out of the reeds by the Thames side, above Battersea, when he went to swim there; but he was so awed by majesty his heart misgave him, and he not only relented, but persuaded the remainder of his associates from such an intention.

This strange interview resulted in Charles pardoning Blood his many crimes. The Duke of Ormond, at his majesty's request, likewise forgave him. Nor did the king's interest

in the villain end here; for he gave him a pension of five hundred pounds a year, and admitted him to his private friendship. Blood was therefore constantly at court, and made one of that strange assembly of wits and profligates which surrounded the throne. 'No man,' says Carte the historian, 'was more assiduous than he. If anyone had a business at court that stuck, he made his application to Blood as the most industrious and successful solicitor; and many gentlemen courted his acquaintance, as the Indians pray to the devil, that he may not hurt them. He was perpetually in the royal apartments, and affected particularly to be in the same room where the Duke of Ormond was, to the indignation of all others, though neglected and overlooked by his grace.'

CHAPTER XI.

Terror falls upon the people.—Rumours of a plague.—A sign in the heavens.—Flight from the capital.—Preparations against the dreaded enemy.—Dr. Boghurst's testimony.—God's terrible voice in the city.—Rules made by the lord mayor.—Massacre of animals.—O, dire death!—Spread of the distemper.—Horrible sights.—State of the deserted capital.—‘Bring out your dead.’—Ashes to ashes.—Fires are lighted.—Relief of the poor.—The mortality bills.

It came to pass during the fifth month of the year 1665, that a great terror fell upon the city of London; even as a sombre cloud darkens the midday sky. For it was whispered abroad a plague had come amongst the people, fears of which had been entertained, and signs of which had been obvious for some time. During the previous November a few persons had fallen victims to this dreaded pestilence, but the weather being cold and the atmosphere clear, it had made no progress till April. In that month two men had died of this most foul disease; and

in the first week of May its victims numbered nine; and yet another fortnight and it had hurried seventeen citizens to the grave.

Now the memory of their wickedness rising before them, dread took up its abode in all men's hearts; for none knew but his day of reckoning was at hand. And their consternation was greater when it was remembered that in the third year of this century thirty-six thousand citizens of London had died of the plague, while twenty-five years later it had swept away thirty-five thousand; and eleven years after full ten thousand persons perished of this same pestilence. Moreover, but two years previous, a like scourge had been rife in Holland; and in Amsterdam alone twenty-four thousand citizens had died from its effects.

And the terror of the citizens of London was yet more forcibly increased by the appearance in April of a blazing star or comet, bearing a tail apparently six yards in length, which rose sometimes in a lurid sky, and passed with ominous movement from west to east.* The king with his

* It is worthy of notice that Lilly, in his 'Astrological Predictions,' published in 1648, declared the year 1656

queen and court, prompted by curiosity, stayed up one night to watch this blazing star pass above the silent city; the Royal Society in behalf of science embodied many learned comments regarding it in their 'Philosophical Transactions;' but the great body of the people regarded it as a visible signal of God's certain wrath. They were more confirmed in this opinion, as some amongst them, whose judgments were distorted by fears, declared the comet had at times before their eyes assumed the appearance of a fiery sword threatening the sinful city. It was also noted in the spring of this year that birds and wild fowls had left their accustomed places, and few swallows were seen. But in the previous summer there had been 'such a multitude of flies that they lined the insides of houses; and if any threads of strings did hang down in any place, they were presently thick-set with flies like ropes of onions; and swarms of ants covered the highways that you

would be 'ominous to London, unto her merchants at sea, to her traffique at land, to her poor, to her rich, to all sorts of people inhabiting in her or her Liberties, by reason of sundry fires and a consuming plague.'

might have taken up a handful at a time, both winged and creeping ants ; and such a multitude of croaking frogs in ditches that you might have heard them before you saw them,' as is set down by one William Boghurst, apothecary at the White Hart in St. Giles-in-the-Fields, who wrote a learned 'Treatis on the Plague' in 1666, he being the only man who up to that time had done so from experience and observation.* And from such signs, as likewise from knowledge that the pestilence daily increased, all felt a season of bitter tribulation was at hand.

According to 'Some Observations of the Plague,' written by Dr. Hodges for use of a peer of the realm, the dread malady was communicated to London from the Netherlands 'by way of contagion.' It first made its appearance in the parishes of St. Giles and St. Martin's, Westminster, from which directions it gradually spread to Holborn, Fleet Street, the Strand, and

* This quaint and curious production, which has never been printed, and which furnishes the following pages with some strange details, is preserved in the Sloane Collection of Manuscripts in the British Museum.

the city, finally reaching to the east, bringing death invariably in its train.

The distemper was not only fatal in its termination, but loathsome in its progress ; for the blood of those affected, being poisoned by atmospheric contagion, bred venom in the body, which burst forth into nauseous sores and uncleanness ; or otherwise preyed with more rapid fatality internally, in some cases causing death before its victims were assured of disease. Nor did it spare the young and robust any more than those weak of frame or ripe with years, but attacking stealthily, killed speedily. It was indeed the 'pestilence that walketh in darkness, and the destruction that wasteth in the noon-day.' In the month of May, when it was yet uncertain if the city would be spared even in part, persons of position and wealth, and indeed those endowed with sufficient means to support themselves elsewhere, resolved to fly from the capital ; whilst such as had neither home, friends, nor expectation of employment in other places, remained behind. Accordingly great preparations were made by those who determined on flight ; and all day long vast crowds gathered

round my lord mayor's house in St. Helen's, Bishopsgate, seeking certificates of health, so that for some weeks it was difficult to reach his door for the throng that gathered there, as is stated by John Noorthouck. Such official testimonies to the good health of those leaving London had now become necessary; for the inhabitants of provincial towns, catching the general alarm, refused to shelter in their houses, or even let pass through their streets, the residents of the plague-stricken city, unless officially assured they were free from the dreaded distemper. Nay, even with such certificates in their possession, many were refused admittance to inns, or houses of entertainment, and were therefore obliged to sleep in fields by night, and beg food by day, and not a few deaths were caused by want and exposure.

And now were the thoroughfares of the capital crowded all day long with coaches conveying those who sought safety in flight, and with waggons and carts containing their household goods and belongings, until it seemed as if the city would be left without a soul. Many merchants and shipowners together

with their families betook themselves to vessels, which they caused to be towed down the river towards Greenwich, and in which they resided for months ; whilst others sought refuge in smacks and fishing-boats, using them as shelters by day, and lodging on the banks by night. Some few families remaining in the capital laid in stores of provisions, and shutting themselves up securely in their houses, permitted none to enter or leave, by which means some of them escaped contagion and death. The court tarried until the 29th of June, and then left for Hampton, none too soon, for the pestilence had reached almost to the palace gates. The queen mother likewise departed, retiring into France ; from which country she never returned.

All through the latter part of May, and the whole of the following month, this flight from the dread enemy of mankind continued ; presenting a melancholy spectacle to those who remained, until at last the capital seemed veritably a city of the dead. But for the credit of humanity be it stated, that not all possessed of health and wealth abandoned the town. Promi-

nent amongst those who remained were the Duke of Albemarle, Lord Craven, the lord mayor, Sir John Laurence, some of his aldermen, and a goodly number of physicians, surgeons, and apothecaries; all of whom by their skill or exertions sought to check the hungry ravages of death. The offices which medical men voluntarily performed during this period of dire affliction were loathsome to a terrible degree. 'I commonly dressed forty sores in a day,' says Dr. Boghurst, whose simple words convey a forcible idea of his nobility; 'held the pulse of patients sweating in their beds half a quarter of an hour together; let blood; administered clysters to the sick; held them up in their beds to keep them from strangling and choking, half an hour together commonly, and suffered their breathing in my face several times when they were dying; eat and drank with them, especially those that had sores; sat down by their bedsides and upon their beds, discoursing with them an hour together. If I had time I stayed by them to see them die. Then if people had nobody to help them (for help was scarce at such time and place) I helped to lay them forth

out of the bed, and afterwards into the coffin; and last of all, accompanied them to the ground.'

Of the physicians remaining in the city, nine fell a sacrifice to duty. Amongst those who survived was the learned Dr. Nathaniel Hodges, who was spared to meet a philanthropist's fate in penury and neglect.* The king had, on outbreak of the distemper, shown solicitude for his citizens by summoning a privy council, when a committee of peers was formed for 'Prevention and Spreading of the Infection.' Under their orders the College of Physicians drew up 'Certain necessary Directions for the Prevention and Cure of the Plague, with Divers remedies for small Change,' which were printed in pamphlet form, and widely distributed amongst the people.†

* Dr. Hodges subsequently wrote a work entitled 'Loimologia; or, an Historical Account of the Plague of London,' first published in 1672; of which, together with a collection of the bills of mortality for 1665, entitled 'London's Dreadful Visitation,' and a pamphlet by the Rev. Thomas Vincent, 'God's Terrible Voice in the City,' printed in 1667, De Foe largely availed himself in writing his vivid but unreliable 'Journal of the Plague Year,' which first saw the light in 1722.

† We learn that at this time the College was stored with

The lord mayor, having likewise the welfare of the people at heart, 'conceived and published' rules to be observed, and orders to be obeyed, by them during this visitation. These directed the appointment of two examiners for every parish, who were bound to discover those who were sick, and inquire into the nature of their illness: and finding persons afflicted by plague, they, with the members of their family and domestics, were to be confined in their houses. These were to be securely locked outside, and guarded day and night by watchmen, whose duty it should be to prevent persons entering or leaving those habitations; as

'men of learning, virtue, and probity, nothing acquainted with the little arts of getting a name by plotting against the honesty and credulity of the people.' The prescriptions given by this worthy body were consequently received with a simple faith which later and more sceptical generations might deny them. Perhaps the most remarkable of these directions, given under the heading of 'Medicines External,' was the following: 'Pull off the feathers from the tails of living cocks, hens, pigeons, or chickens, and holding their bills, hold them hard to the botch or swelling, and so keep them at that part until they die, and by that means draw out the poison. It is good to apply a cupping glass, or embers in a dish, with a handful of sorrel upon the embers.'

likewise to perform such offices as were required, such as conveying medicines and food. And all houses visited by the distemper were to be forthwith marked on the door by a red cross a foot long, with the words *Lord have mercy upon us* set close over the same sacred sign. Female searchers, 'such as are of honest reputation, and of the best sort as can be got of the kind,' were selected that they might report of what disease people died; such women not being permitted during this visitation to use any public work or employment, or keep shop or stall, or wash linen for the people. Nurses to attend the afflicted deserted by their friends were also appointed. And inasmuch as multitudes of idle rogues and wandering beggars swarming the city were a great means of spreading disease, the constables had orders not to suffer their presence in the streets. And dogs and cats, being domestic animals, apt to run from house to house, and carry infection in their fur and hair, an order was made that they should be killed, and an officer nominated to see it carried into execution. It was computed that, in accordance with this edict, forty thousand

dogs, and five times that number of cats, were massacred.

All plays, bear-baitings, exhibitions, and games were forbidden; as were likewise 'all public feasting, and particularly by the companies of the city, and dinners at taverns, ale-houses, and other places of common entertainment; and the money thereby spared, be employed for the benefit and relief of the poor visited with the infection.' Pest-houses were opened at Tothill Fields, Westminster, and at Bunhill Fields, near Old Street, for reception of the sick: and indeed every possible remedy calculated to check the disease was adopted. Some of these, though considered necessary to the well-being of the community, were by many citizens regarded as hardships, more especially the rule which related to closing of infected houses.

The misery endured by those in health suffering such confinement, was scarcely less than that realized by the afflicted. And fear making way for disease, it frequently occurred a whole family, when confined with one infected member, speedily became stricken by plague, and consequently overtaken by death. It there-

fore happened that many attempts were made by those in health to escape incarceration. In some cases they bribed, and in others ill-treated the watchmen: one of whom was actually blown up by gunpowder in Coleman Street, that those he guarded might flee unmolested. Again, it chanced that strong men, rendered desperate when brought face to face with loathsome death, lowered themselves from windows of their houses in sight of the watch, whom they threatened with instant death if they cried out or stirred.

The apprehension of the sick, who were in most cases deserted by their friends, was increased tenfold by the practices of public nurses: for being hardened to affliction by nature of their employment, and incapable of remorse for crime by reason of their vileness, they were guilty of many barbarous usages. 'These wretches,' says Dr. Hodges, 'out of greediness to plunder the dead, would strangle their patients, and charge it to the distemper in their throats. Others would secretly convey the pestilential taint from sores of the infected to those who were well; and nothing indeed

deterred these abandoned miscreants from prosecuting their avaricious purposes by all methods their wickedness could invent; who, although they were without witnesses to accuse them, yet it is not doubted but divine vengeance will overtake such wicked barbarities with due punishment. Nay, some were remarkably struck from heaven in the perpetration of their crimes; and one particularly amongst many, as she was leaving the house of a family, all dead, loaded with her robberies, fell down lifeless under her burden in the street. And the case of a worthy citizen was very remarkable, who, being suspected dying by his nurse, was beforehand stripped by her; but recovering again, he came a second time into the world naked.'

But notwithstanding all precautions and care taken by the Duke of Albemarle and the worthy lord mayor, the dreadful pestilence spread with alarming rapidity: as may be judged from the fact that the number who died in the first week of June amounted to forty-three, whilst during the last week of that month two hundred and sixty-seven persons were carried to their graves. From the 4th of July to the

11th, seven hundred and fifty-five deaths were chronicled; the following eight days the death rate rose to one thousand and eighty-two; whilst the ensuing week this high figure was increased by over eight hundred. For the month of August, the mortality bill recorded seventeen thousand and thirty-six deaths; and during September, twenty-six thousand two hundred and thirty persons perished in the city.

The whole British nation was stricken with consternation at the fate of the capital. 'In some houses,' says Dr. Hodges, speaking from personal experience, 'carcases lay waiting for burial, and in others were persons in their last agonies. In one room might be heard dying groans, in another the ravings of delirium, and not far off relations and friends bewailing both their loss and the dismal prospect of their own sudden departure. Death was the sure midwife to all children, and infants passed immediately from the womb to the grave. Some of the infected run about staggering like drunken men, and fall and expire in the streets; whilst others lie half dead and comatose, but never to be

waked but by the last trumpet.' The plague had indeed encompassed the walls of the city, and poured, in upon it without mercy. A heavy stifling atmosphere, vapours by day and blotting out all traces of stars and sky by night, hovered like a palpable shape of dire vengeance above the doomed city. During many weeks 'there was a general calm and serenity, as if both wind and rain had been expelled the kingdom, so that there was not so much as to move a flame.' The oppressive silence of brooding death, unbroken now even by the passing bell, weighed stupor-like upon the wretched survivors. The thoroughfares were deserted, grass sprang green upon side-paths and steps of dwellings; and the broad street in Whitechapel became like unto a field. Most houses bore upon their doors the dread sign of the red cross, with the supplication for mercy written above. Some of the streets were barricaded at both ends, the inhabitants either having fled into the country or been carried to their graves; and it was estimated in all that over seven thousand dwellings were deserted. All commerce, save that dealing with the necessities of life, was abandoned; the parks

forsaken and locked, the Inns of Court closed, the public marts abandoned. A few of the church doors were opened, and some gathered within that they might humbly beseech pardon for the past, and ask mercy in the present. But as the violence of the distemper increased, even the houses of God were forsaken; and those who ventured abroad walked in the centre of the street, avoiding contact or conversation with friend or neighbour; each man dreading and avoiding his fellow, lest he should be to him the harbinger of death. And all carried rue and wormwood in their hands, and myrrh and zedoary in their mouths, as protection against infection. Now were the faces of all pale with apprehension, none knowing when the fatal malady might carry them hence; and moreover sad, as became those who stand in the presence of death.

And such sights were to be witnessed day after day as made the heart sick. 'It would be endless,' says the Rev. Thomas Vincent, 'to speak what we have seen and heard; of some, in their frenzy, rising out of their beds and leaping about their rooms; others crying and roaring at their windows; some coming forth almost naked and

running into the streets; strange things have others spoken and done when the disease was upon them: but it was very sad to hear of one, who being sick alone, and it is like frantic, burnt himself in his bed. And amongst other sad spectacles methought two were very affecting: one of a woman coming alone and weeping by the door where I lived, with a little coffin under her arm, carrying it to the new churchyard. I did judge that it was the mother of the child, and that all the family besides was dead, and she was forced to coffin up and bury with her own hands this her last dead child. Another was of a man at the corner of the Artillery Wall, that as I judge, through the dizziness of his head with the disease, which seized upon him there, had dashed his face against the wall; and when I came by, he lay hanging with his bloody face over the rails, and bleeding upon the ground; within half an hour he died in that place.'

And as the pestilence increased, it was found impossible to provide coffins or even separate graves for those who perished. And therefore, in order to bury the deceased, great carts passed through the streets after sunset, attended by

linkmen and preceded by a bellman crying in weird and solemn tones, 'Bring out your dead.' At the intimation of the watchmen stationed before houses bearing red crosses upon their doors, the sad procession would tarry, when coffinless, and oftentimes shroudless, rigid, loathsome, and malodorous bodies were hustled into the carts with all possible speed. Then once more the melancholy cortege took its way adown the dark, deserted street, the yellow glare of links falling on the ghastly burden they accompanied, the dirge-like call of the bellman sounding on the ears of the living like a summons from the dead. And so, receiving additional freight upon its way, the cart proceeded to one of the great pits dug in the parish churchyards of Aldgate and Whitechapel, or in Finsbury Fields close by the Artillery Ground. These, measuring about forty feet in length, eighteen in breadth, and twenty in depth, were destined to receive scores of bodies irrespective of creed or class. The carts being brought to these dark and weirdsome gulphs, looking all the blacker from the flickering lights of candles and garish gleams of lanterns placed beside them, the bodies,

without rite or ceremony, were shot into them, and speedily covered with clay. For the accomplishment of this sad work night was found too brief. And what lent additional horror to the circumstances of these burials was, that those engaged in this duty would occasionally drop lifeless during their labour. So that it sometimes happened the dead-carts were found without driver, linkman, or bellman. And it was estimated that the parish of Stepney alone lost one hundred and sixteen gravediggers and sextons within that year.

During the month of September, the pestilence raged with increased fury ; and it now seemed as if the merciless distemper would never cease whilst a single inhabitant remained in the city. The lord mayor, having found all remedies to stay its progress utterly fail, by advice of the medical faculty, ordered that great fires should be kindled in certain districts by way of purifying the air. Accordingly, two hundred chaldrons of coal, at four pounds a chaldron, were devoted to this purpose. At first the fires were with great difficulty made to burn, through the scarcity, it was believed, of oxygen in the atmosphere ;

but once kindled, they continued blazing for three days and three nights, when a heavy down-pour of rain falling they were extinguished. The following night, death carried off four thousand souls, and the experiment of these cleansing fires was discontinued. All through this month fear and tribulation continued ; the death rate, from the 5th of September to the 3rd of October, amounting to twenty-four thousand one hundred and seventy-one.

During October, the weather being cool and dry, the pestilence gave promise of rapid decrease. Hope came to the people, and was received with eager greeting. Once more windows were unshuttered, doors were opened, and the more venturous walked abroad. The great crisis had passed. In the middle of the month Mr. Pepys travelled on foot to the Tower, and records his impressions. 'Lord,' he says, 'how empty the streets are and melancholy, so many poor sick people in the streets full of sores ; and so many sad stories overheard as I walk, everybody talking of this dead, and that man sick, and so many in this place, and so many in that. And they tell me that in Westminster there is never

a physician and but one apothecary left, all being dead; but that there are great hopes of a decrease this week. God send it.'

The while, trade being discontinued, those who had lived by commerce or labour were supported by charity. To this good purpose the king contributed a thousand pounds per week, and Dr. Sheldon, Archbishop of Canterbury—who remained at Lambeth during the whole time—by letters to his bishops, caused great sums to be collected throughout the country and remitted to him for this laudable purpose. Nor did those of position or wealth fail in responding to calls made upon them at this time; their contributions being substantial enough to permit the lord mayor to distribute upwards of one hundred thousand pounds a week amongst the poor and afflicted for several months.

In October the death rate fell to nine thousand four hundred and forty-four; in November to three thousand four hundred and forty-nine; and in December to less than one thousand. Therefore, after a period of unprecedented suffering, the people took courage once more, for life

is dear to all men. And those who had fled the plague-stricken city returned to find a scene of desolation, greater in its misery than words can describe. But the tide of human existence having once turned, the capital gradually resumed its former appearance. Shops which had been closed were opened afresh; houses whose inmates had been carried to the grave became again centres of activity; the sound of traffic was heard in streets long silent; church bells called the citizens to prayer; marts were crowded; and the people wore an air of cheerfulness becoming the survivors of a calamity. And so all things went on as before.

The mortality bills computed the number of burials which took place in London during this year at ninety-seven thousand three hundred and six, of which sixty-eight thousand five hundred and ninety-six were attributed to the plague. This estimate has been considered by all historians as erroneous. For on the first appearance of the distemper, the number of deaths set down was far below that which truth warranted, in order that the citizens might not be affrighted; and when it was at its height no

exact account of those shifted from the dead-carts into the pits was taken. Moreover, many were buried by their friends in fields and gardens. Lord Clarendon, an excellent authority, states that though the weekly bills reckoned the number of deaths at about one hundred thousand, yet 'many who could compute very well, concluded that there were in truth double that number who died; and that in one week, when the bill mentioned only six thousand, there had in truth fourteen thousand died.'

END OF VOL. I.

